





PRICE SIXPENCE.

*John S. Salter
June 1892*

Six Years of Unionist Government

1886-1892

BY

C. A. WHITMORE, M.P.

CONSERVATIVE MEMBER FOR CHELSEA

LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD

37 BEDFORD STREET, STRAND, W.C.

1892

An Edition is also published in Cloth, price 1s. 6d.



SIX YEARS

OF

UNIONIST GOVERNMENT

1886—1892

BY

C. A. WHITMORE, M.P.

CONSERVATIVE MEMBER FOR CHELSEA

LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD

37 BEDFORD STREET, STRAND, W.C.

1892

[All rights reserved]



CONTENTS

	<small>PAGE</small>
I. IRELAND	I
THE 'PLAN OF CAMPAIGN'	3
CRIMINAL LAW (IRELAND) AMENDMENT ACT	3
THE IRISH LAND BILL	5
EVENTS OF 1888	5
EXTENSION OF THE ASHBOURNE ACT	6
EVENTS OF 1889	6
THE SPECIAL COMMISSION	7
GREAT IMPROVEMENT IN IRELAND, 1890	8
REPORT OF THE PARNELL COMMISSION	9
LIGHT RAILWAYS	10
IRISH LAND PURCHASE BILL	12
SPLIT IN THE IRISH PARTY AFTER THE O'SHEA DIVORCE CASE	13
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE FOR RELIEF OF IRISH DISTRESS	14
THE LAND PURCHASE BILL AND ITS OPERATION	23
COLLAPSE OF THE 'PLAN OF CAMPAIGN' IN 1891	28
THE IRISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL, 1892	30
THE IRISH EDUCATION BILL, 1892	34
IRISH STATISTICS SHOWING IMPROVEMENT, 1886-1892	34
RESULTS OF UNIONIST GOVERNMENT IN IRELAND	36
II. THE FOREIGN OFFICE	37
EGYPT	38
AFRICA	39

	PAGE
III. INDIA - - - - -	43
IV. THE COLONIES - - - - -	44
AUSTRALASIA - - - - -	45
SOUTH AFRICA - - - - -	45
NORTH AMERICA - - - - -	46
IMPERIAL DEFENCE ACT - - - - -	47
V. THE TREASURY - - - - -	48
BUDGET OF 1888 - - - - -	48
BUDGET OF 1889 - - - - -	49
BUDGET OF 1891 - - - - -	50
BUDGET OF 1892 - - - - -	51
SUMMARY - - - - -	51
THE NATIONAL DEBT - - - - -	52
VI. THE WAR OFFICE - - - - -	53
VII. THE ADMIRALTY - - - - -	55
VIII. HOME OFFICE - - - - -	61
IX. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD - - - - -	64
X. BOARD OF TRADE - - - - -	69
XI. BOARD OF AGRICULTURE - - - - -	71
XII. THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT - - - - -	74
FREE EDUCATION - - - - -	80
XIII. SCOTLAND (THE SCOTCH OFFICE) - - - - -	84
XIV. POST OFFICE - - - - -	85
SUPPLEMENT - - - - -	86
CONCLUSION - - - - -	87

P R E F A C E

MR. BALFOUR, in his speech at the Conservative Club on April 1, 1892, contrasted the 'earned dividends' of the Unionist Government with the 'prospectuses' of the Gladstonian Party, and said, 'I think in this matter we are at some disadvantage from the very wealth of topics on which we have a right to dilate'; and, again, 'If we are to deal with the policy of the Unionist Party in the last six years, it is perfectly impossible within the compass of a single speech to do justice even to one of the elements which make up that policy as a whole, and still more impossible to do anything like justice to the whole scope of the transactions in which the various members of the Government have been concerned.' Yet it is most important that the electors should have some opportunity of perceiving at a glance the whole scope of these notable transactions. And so in this little book I have tried to give an accurate and succinct narrative of the actual performances of the Unionist Government in every department of public affairs. The narrative makes no pretension to literary style, but I hope that it will supply both to readers and to speakers a chronicle of these facts in a form rather more coherent, and rather less repellent, than is possible in the ordinary political leaflet. I wish to express my obligations to the compilers of the 'National Union Gleanings' and of the 'Campaign Guide,' from the latter of which I have ventured to make quotations somewhat freely.

The first Session of the Parliament elected at the General Election of 1886 commenced on August 6. The House of Commons was composed of 316 Conservatives, 78 Liberal Unionists, 191 Gladstonians, and 85 Parnellites, giving a majority of 113 to the Unionists. The Session was devoted by the Government to the voting of the Estimates for the year. But one Government Bill of some little interest was passed. Up to this date an annual sum of £10,000 had been paid out of the Consolidated Fund to the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury for Secret Service in this country. It had been disbursed by him without the control of Parliament, and it was commonly supposed that it had been habitually applied to the electioneering requirements of the party in power. By the Secret Service Money (Repeal) Act the pre-existing Acts, under which this payment had been made, were repealed.

An exception to the general rule that no facilities should be given in this Session for Private Members' Bills was made in favour of Mr. Parnell's Tenants' Relief Bill, the Second Reading of which was taken on September 20. Based on the assumption that there had been a great and general fall in the prices of agricultural produce in Ireland, this Bill in its principal proposal provided that payment by a tenant of 50 per cent. of his rent and of his arrears should relieve him from the enforcement of eviction. The Government opposed the Bill. They denied the greatness of the depression; they questioned the alleged probability of agrarian disturbances in the winter, unless they were artificially excited by political agitators. They announced that they were sending Sir Redvers Buller on a special mission of inquiry into the state of the west and south-west of Ireland, and that two Royal Commissions would be forthwith appointed—the first to inquire into the working of the Land Acts of 1881 and 1885, and the second to inquire

into the best methods of developing the material resources of Ireland. The chief interest of the debate lay in the new cleavage between parties which it disclosed. On a question, Irish indeed, but not of Home Rule, and not essentially connected with Home Rule, Mr. Gladstone and his followers supported Mr. Parnell, while Lord Hartington and his party joined the Government in resisting the Bill, which was rejected by 297 to 202. In the majority there voted 266 Conservatives and 31 Liberal Unionists; and in the minority 122 Gladstonians, 1 Unionist, and 81 Parnellites. But the Bill had served the purpose. It was a characteristic illustration of a favourite method in Parnellite strategy. A Bill was introduced so indefensible as to be foredoomed to defeat; and then its defeat was used as the justification, and even alleged to be the cause, of subsequent disturbances in Ireland, which, in fact, were independent of it, and were deliberately organized by the Nationalist leaders.

Parliament met for its second Session on January 27, 1887. Every Conservative member will recall the feeling of uncertainty and depression with which he entered the House of Commons that foggy afternoon. The sudden secession of Lord Randolph Churchill, the substitution of Mr. Smith as leader of the House, the death of Lord Iddesleigh, the failure of Mr. Goschen to obtain a seat at Liverpool, the Round Table Conference, the growing conviction that the calculated lawlessness of the Nationalist Party called for a strengthening of the Criminal Law in Ireland—all these circumstances combined to produce a general impression that the Unionist alliance would break down, and that the Government itself could hardly live through the Session. A further blow was apparently dealt to the Government when its Chief Secretary for Ireland, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, retired through ill health from his office, though not from the Cabinet. Mr. Balfour took his place; and the

changes in the Cabinet necessitated by these events were made as follows: Mr. Goschen became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and was returned for St. George's, Hanover Square; Lord Salisbury became Foreign Minister; Mr. Smith, First Lord of the Treasury; Lord Knutsford (Sir Henry Holland), Secretary for the Colonies; Mr. Stanhope, Secretary for War. As thus reconstituted, and with the addition of Lord Cadogan and Mr. Ritchie in April, and of Mr. Chaplin on his appointment as Minister of Agriculture, and with the substitution in 1888 of Sir M. Hicks Beach for Lord Stanley, as President of the Board of Trade, the Cabinet remained unaltered until the death of Mr. Smith in October, 1891. Henceforth it will be convenient to record the work under the headings of the several departments which initiated it.

SIX YEARS OF UNIONIST GOVERNMENT

I.

IRELAND.

THE General Election of 1886 had turned exclusively upon the Irish policy of Mr. Gladstone. It was on that issue that the appeal to the country was made ; it was on that issue that the country gave its answer. Recalling that electoral fight, in the light of the present condition of politics, and of the thoughts which are stirring the minds of masses of men, it is most remarkable how the conflict between the cause of the Union and the cause of Home Rule then engrossed the attention of the electorate, and drove into the background agrarian longings, urban discontent, and even the new dreams of labour. Although this was an indisputable fact, and although the verdict of the constituencies on this single and clear issue was distinct and emphatic, neither the Irish nor the British section of the Home Rule Party regarded it as decisive or final. And both sections, in their different methods, began without delay to work for a reversal of this verdict. On August 17 the National Liberal Federation issued a manifesto, affirming its continued allegiance to Mr. Gladstone and his Home Rule policy, and asserting that the welfare of the country and the future of Liberalism were inseparably connected with the question of Irish self-government. Mr. Gladstone published a pamphlet, 'The History of an Idea,'

in the same month, in which he expressed himself confident of the realization of his policy in a not distant future. 'Look at the question,' he wrote, 'which way we will, the cause of Irish self-government lives and moves, and can hardly fail to receive more life and more propulsion from the hands of those who have been its successful opponents in one of its particular forms. It will arise as a wounded warrior sometimes arises on the field of battle and stabs to the heart some soldier of the victorious army who has been standing over him.' While Mr. Parnell in the House of Commons on August 24 said, 'After the present Government have exhibited themselves as a spectacle for gods and men for a year or two in their attempt to govern Ireland,' English opinion will come round to Home Rule.

In his speeches in the House of Commons in support of his Home Rule Bill, Mr. Gladstone had insisted upon the social disorder of Ireland as the main cause of, and the justification for, this great change in his policy towards Ireland. It was obviously, therefore, the policy of the Nationalist Party to perpetuate, and even increase, the social disorder of Ireland. By this policy they would be preserving the very *raison d'être* of Gladstonian Home Rule; incidentally they would be impoverishing and weakening their hereditary enemy, 'the English garrison,' and, as an ulterior result, they would be compelling the Unionist Government to adopt 'Coercion,' and in consequence oblige it, as they fondly hoped, to shatter the Unionist alliance, and disgust the British democracy. This policy was nakedly avowed by Mr. John Redmond in Wexford on August 5, 1887. 'When Mr. Gladstone was defeated in England last year,' he said, 'and when the Tories came into power, they boasted they could govern Ireland by means of the ordinary law. Mr. Gladstone, on the contrary, told the people of England that they had to choose between Coercion on the one side, and Home Rule on the other. Home Rule was defeated at the last election in Great Britain, and I say advisedly that if, in the face of that defeat, the Tories had been able to rule Ireland with the ordinary law, the result would have been in England and Scotland to throw back our cause perhaps for a generation, and to give the lie direct to the prophecy of

Mr. Gladstone. . . . We have been able to force the Government to give up the ordinary law, and to fall back once more on Coercion.'

The 'Plan of Campaign.'

The Plan of Campaign was suggested in an article in *United Ireland* of October 23, and further explained in a special supplement to that paper of November 20, which was circulated throughout Ireland. It was described by Mr. Harrington, M.P., as 'a plan by which the tenants could fight the landlord with the landlord's money. In stricter accuracy it was described as 'an impudent and fraudulent device to enable tenants to defy their landlords, and to pay them just as much or as little as they thought fit, the tenant lodging in the hands of a confederate the money which ought to have gone to pay his stipulated rent, and thereby making, or pretending to make, himself insolvent.'

Criminal Law (Ireland) Amendment Act.

The Queen's Speech in 1887 had this paragraph :

'The condition of Ireland still requires your anxious attention. The relations between the owners and occupiers of land, which, in the early part of the autumn exhibited signs of improvement, have since been seriously disturbed in some districts by organized attempts to incite the latter class to combine against the fulfilment of their legal obligations. The efforts of my Government to cope with this evil have been seriously impeded by difficulties incident to the method at present prescribed by statute for dealing with such offences. Your early attention will be called to proposals for reforms in legal procedure which seem necessary to secure the prompt and efficient administration of the criminal law.'

On March 28 the Criminal Law (Ireland) Amendment Bill was introduced, and then began the prolonged and arduous Parliamentary struggle to pass it through the House of Commons against the combined forces of the Irish Party and of the regular Radical Opposition. It was confidently asserted by many Radical leaders that this attempt must fail. Without question, the Radical leaders did their best to fulfil their predictions. When, after repeated all-night sittings, the House of Commons adjourned on May 23 for

the Whitsuntide recess, it had only got through the second clause in Committee. So slow was the progress made after that recess, that on June 10 Mr. Smith moved that if the Bill were not reported by 10 p.m. on the 17th inst., the Chairman should put the remaining clauses without debate. The Bill had then occupied the House for thirty-five full working days. On the 17th, Clause 6 was reached when ten o'clock struck, and while Sir Charles Russell was speaking, the Chairman, interrupting him, put the question that Clause 6 stand part of the Bill. The Irish members then left the House in a body ; the bulk of the Radicals followed them. The remaining clauses were put *seriatim* without a division, and the Bill was reported to the House. The third reading was taken on July 7. Mr. Gladstone moved the rejection of the Bill, and was defeated by 349 to 267. And thus the first stage in the conflict between the Unionist Party and Irish sedition, aided by British Radicalism, was accomplished, and the Government was armed with the powers which it deemed requisite for the suppression of crime in Ireland. It remained to be proved how far British public opinion would tolerate the rigorous exercise of these powers, and, secondly, if so, whether the powers themselves would be adequate to their object.

The Irish leaders, and especially Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien, showed incessant activity in starting and maintaining the Plan of Campaign on selected estates, and in holding meetings in defiance of the law. On the other hand, with consistent firmness, the Irish Administration proclaimed meetings that were likely to lead to disorder, or were called with lawless objects ; and in their prosecution of law-breakers, and in the subsequent prison-treatment of those who had been sentenced to imprisonment, were no respecters of persons, and proceeded with equal rigour against every wrong-doer, regardless of the fact that he was a member of Parliament, a Lord Mayor, a poet, or an Englishman of good birth. During the remainder of this year, 1887, the leading incidents in the struggle between order and disorder were the meeting at Mitchelstown on September 9, which unfortunately ended in loss of life, and the proclaimed meeting held at Woodford on October 2, which led to the imprisonment of Mr. Wilfred Blunt and

Mr. William O'Brien. Amongst the many Irish members whom it became necessary to proceed against, and out of whose case a special attempt to enlist sympathy was made, was Mr. T. D. Sullivan, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, and a writer of Nationalist songs.

The Irish Land Bill.

In the Session of 1887, was passed the first of the Government's remedial measures—their Land Bill. It owed its origin to the Report of the Cowper Commission. Its principal provision enabled all leaseholders—150,000 in number—who had been excluded from the Act of 1881, to go into Court and obtain a judicial revision of their rents.

Events of 1888.

During 1888 the Nationalist leaders did not relax their efforts to foment disorder, to maintain the Plan of Campaign, and to oblige the Executive to prosecute them for taking part in illegal meetings and conspiracies. The Executive still kept steadily to its resolute policy. The events which excited most interest in Ireland were the collision between the populace and the soldiery and police, at a proclaimed meeting, at Ennis, on April 15; the death of John Mandeville, at Mitchelstown, on July 8, after his release from Tullamore Gaol; and the Papal Rescript, condemning the Plan of Campaign, which was issued after the visit to Ireland, on a special mission of inquiry, of Monsignor Persico. In Parliament, in this year, a beginning was made with that portion of the remedial policy of the Government which was directed towards the material development of Ireland. On July 2 Mr. Balfour introduced Bills for the drainage of the lands within the valleys of the Bann, Barrow, and Shannon. The second reading of the Bann Bill was carried on July 19, and it passed into law after much obstruction from British Radicals and a very small knot of Irish members. Owing to this opposition it became necessary to drop the other two Bills.

In the latter part of this Session much time was spent and great heat generated in the debates on the Bill introduced by the Government for the creation of a Special Commission to inquire into and report upon the charges

brought by *The Times*, in its articles 'Parnellism and Crime,' against the Nationalist leaders. The Bill was introduced on July 16, and read a third time on August 8.

Extension of the Ashbourne Act.

In the autumn Session of 1888, on November 19, the Government brought in a Bill to extend the Ashbourne Act of 1885, by the grant of a further sum of £5,000,000 for land purchase in Ireland. The former Act had been an unequivocal success. It was stated by the Irish Attorney-General that since its passage there had been 14,338 signed agreements to purchase, requiring for execution £5,986,000, of which no less than 6,833 were for holdings under £30 a year. The instalments had been regularly paid, and of the £90,000 liability, which had accrued since the passing of the Act, only £1,100 remained unpaid. Notwithstanding these facts, and their own past committal to the policy of land purchase, the Radical leaders offered a most determined resistance to the Bill, which, however, was ultimately read a third time in the House of Commons on November 29, by 202 to 141.

Events of 1889.

In 1889, though the Irish leaders continued strenuously to agitate and to support the Plan of Campaign, and though in certain districts there were outbreaks of disorder and resolute refusals to pay rent, yet, taking Ireland as a whole, a beginning of a gradual improvement was seen. Agriculture was more thriving, and rents generally were better paid; the sum total of agrarian crime was diminishing, and where disorder was rampant it was obviously the outcome of deliberate and frantic efforts on the part of individual agitators.* Amongst the most conspicuous incidents in the continued conflict between order and disorder, were the prosecution, in January, of seven Irish members for offences under the Crimes Act, the imprisonment of Mr. William O'Brien and of Mr. Edward Harrington, and the desperate efforts made by Nationalist and Radical sympathizers to excite popular indignation because of their prison treatment.

* In 1888 there were 1,475 prosecutions under the Crimes Act, and 1,082 persons convicted. In 1889 there were 839 prosecutions, and 597 persons convicted.

Mr. O'Brien refused to wear the prison dress. Mr. Harrington objected to the loss of his moustache. The whole Radical press indulged in hysterical pity, and sought to establish a code of privilege for distinguished or educated prisoners. But, as Lord Salisbury said in the House of Lords, 'It was difficult to preserve a sufficiently tragic air over Mr. O'Brien struggling for his clothes, or Mr. Harrington mourning over his moustache.'

The progress of the Plan of Campaign on the Falcarragh estate of Mr. Olphert, and the organized boycotting of Mr. Olphert himself, who was an undeniably good landlord, attracted much attention. Mr. Conybeare, M.P., was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for his actions at evictions rendered necessary on this estate by the conspiracy to refuse to pay rent.

The Special Commission.

In Parliament the earlier portion of the Session in the House of Commons was mainly occupied by a constant and running fire upon the Government from the Irish and Radical benches on questions arising out of the Parnell Commission. When, on February 17, after the collapse of Piggott's evidence and his confession of forgery of the Parnell letters, the *Times* case against Mr. Parnell in this respect was withdrawn, the excitement of the Opposition culminated. When Mr. Parnell spoke for the first time after this, in the debate on Mr. Morley's amendment to the Address, the whole Opposition, including the front bench, rose and waved their hats in boisterous enthusiasm and triumph. It is difficult to realize now how enormously the political importance of this incident was exaggerated at the moment. In the House Radical free-lances openly boasted that we should hear of nothing but Piggott for the remainder of the Session, while at public meetings called by Conservatives the cry of Piggott was as persistently on the tongues of interrupters in the audience, as the popular song of the day is in the mouth of the street-boys of London. The nearest parallel to this theatrical scene that this Parliament has shown was on the night when a credulous Radical brought the false news that Lord Compton had won the bye-election in Holborn, and when, in similar fashion, the

staid Privy Councillors on the front Opposition bench and all their followers rose and wildly waved their orders of the day, and cheered themselves hoarse. There is irony in the reflection that in the one scene the cause for triumph did not exist at all, and that in the other the same men who indulged in such extravagant joy at the exculpation in one matter of Mr. Parnell, subsequently drove him from his leadership and broke up the party which he had created, and could alone keep together.

On May 31 Mr. Balfour introduced four drainage Bills, and a Bill to facilitate the construction of light railways.

Great Improvement in Ireland, 1890.

In 1890 the improvement in the social condition of the country, which had begun to manifest itself in the previous year, continued. On January 24 the provisions of the Crimes Act were relaxed in eleven counties. The opposing force concentrated all their efforts in the typical and culminating struggle at Tipperary between Mr. Smith-Barry, representing order and the legitimate rights of property, and Mr. W. O'Brien, representing the forces of anarchy, sedition, and confiscation. Mr. Smith-Barry had agreed to help another landlord, Mr. Ponsonby, in his resistance to the Plan of Campaign on his estates near Youghal. In retaliation for this, although it was admitted that Mr. Smith-Barry was a good landlord, and that his urban tenants at Tipperary were thriving, and with no just cause of complaint against him, a conspiracy was organized that they should not pay their rents, and that they should leave their shops and homes in what was then the exceptionally prosperous town of Tipperary. To this end a special Tenants' Defence Fund was started. £50,000 was collected. New Tipperary was built, and its completion celebrated by a banquet on April 12, at which Mr. O'Brien was supported by several English members of Parliament. In the autumn Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien were arrested on charges of inciting to non-payment of rent. It was on the first day of their trial at Tipperary, September 25, that a conflict occurred between the police and the crowd at the Court-house, and the stripling, Mr. Harrison, M.P. (a muscular Oxonian six feet high) received injuries. Mr. John Morley was an onlooker

of the disturbance, which is interesting as being about the last event in the long struggle between coercion and agitation which supplied material for prolonged Parliamentary controversy. While the prosecution was still proceeding, Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien disappeared, and forfeited their bail. They made their way to the United States, and on November 19, in their absence, were sentenced to six months' imprisonment, without hard labour.

Report of the Parnell Commission.

In Parliament the Report of the Parnell Commission* was presented on February 13. The most important of the findings politically are these :

1. 'We find that the respondent members of Parliament collectively were not members of a conspiracy having for its object to establish the absolute independence of Ireland; but we find that some of them, together with Mr. Davitt, established and joined in the Land League organization, with the intention, by its means, to bring about the absolute independence of Ireland as a separate nation.' (This charge is found proved against Messrs. Davitt, M. Harris, Dillon, W. O'Brien, W. Redmond, J. O'Connor, J. Condon, and J. J. O'Kelly.)

2. 'We find that the respondents did enter into a conspiracy, by a system of coercion and intimidation, to promote an agrarian agitation against the payment of agricultural rents, for the purpose of impoverishing and expelling from the country the Irish landlords, who were styled the "English garrison."

5. 'We find that the respondents did not directly incite persons to the commission of crime other than intimidation, but that they did incite to intimidation, and that the consequence of their intimidation was that crime and outrage were committed by the persons incited.'

6. 'We find, as to the allegation that the respondents did nothing to prevent crime, and expressed no *bonâ-fide* disapproval, that some of the respondents, and in particular

* For a full digest and summary see 'Handbook to the Report of the Special Commission,' by H. O. Arnold-Forster. London : Edward Arnold, 1890.

Mr. Davitt, did express *bonâ-fide* disapproval of crime and outrage; but that the respondents did not denounce the system of intimidation which led to crime and outrage, but persisted in it with knowledge of its effect.'

9. 'As to the allegation that the respondents invited the assistance and co-operation of, and accepted subscriptions of money from, known advocates of crime and the use of dynamite, we find that the respondents did invite the assistance and co-operation of, and accepted subscriptions of money from, Patrick Ford, a known advocate of crime and the use of dynamite. . . . It has been proved that the respondents invited and obtained the assistance and co-operation of the Physical Force Party in America, including the Clan-na-Gael, and, in order to obtain that assistance, abstained from repudiating or condemning the action of that party.'

Its presentation led to long debates in the House of Commons. On the part of the Government, Mr. Smith moved that the House do 'adopt the report, and thank the Commissioners for their just and impartial conduct.' To which Mr. Gladstone moved as an amendment: 'This House deems it to be a duty to record its reprobation of the false charges of the gravest and most odious description, based upon calumny and forgery, which have been brought against members of this House, and particularly against Mr. Parnell; and while declaring its satisfaction at the exposure of these calumnies, the House expresses its regret for the wrong inflicted and the suffering and loss endured through a protracted period by reason of these acts of flagrant iniquity.' After a long debate the amendment was negatived by 339 to 268 votes.

Light Railways.

On August 12, Mr. Balfour introduced a Bill to enable the works, in connection with the light railways projected in the west and north-west of Ireland, to be advanced with increased expedition. It was beginning to be feared that there would be a serious failure of the potato crop in those districts; it was hoped that the employment to be derived from the construction of these lines would act as relief work

for the temporary distress. The Bill proposed that a special grand jury should be empowered to sanction the schemes forthwith, so that the works might be started before the distress began to be felt. Despite some bitter opposition from a handful of Irish and Radical members, the Bill was rapidly passed through both Houses. Under the provisions of this Act, and of the similar Act of 1889, the *Times* of January 12, 1892, reports as follows :

'Twelve works have been commenced. Ten of them have obtained the confirming orders of the Lord - Lieutenant in Council, the arrangements in the other two cases—viz., Achill Extension and Collooney and Claremorris—being still incomplete, the funds being provided for as stated below—viz. :

	Length Miles.	Free Grant.	Share capital guaranteed by Counties and Treasury.
County Donegal :			
1. Donegal and Killybegs...	19	£115,600	£1,000
2. Stranorlar and Glenties	24	116,000	1,000
County Mayo :			
3. Achill Extension ...	8 $\frac{1}{4}$	67,000	—
4. Westport and Mallastranny	18 $\frac{1}{4}$	131,400	—
5. Ballina and Killala ...	8	44,000	—
County Galway :			
6. Galway and Clifden ...	48 $\frac{1}{4}$	264,600	—
County Kerry :			
7. Headford and Kenmare	19 $\frac{1}{2}$	50,000	60,000
8. Killorglin and Valencia	26 $\frac{3}{4}$	85,000	70,000
County Cork :			
9. Baltimore Extension ...	7	56,700	—
10. Bantry Bay Extension	2	15,000	—
County Down :			
11. Downpatrick and Ard-glass	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	30,000	—
Counties Sligo and Mayo :			
12. Collooney and Claremorris	47	145,000	120,000
	235 $\frac{1}{2}$	1,119,600	252,000

'The Act thus creates twelve lines with an aggregate length of 235½ miles, all of them situated in the most distressed districts, with the exception of the short line between Downpatrick and Ardglass, which has been assisted solely in the interests of the large fishery industry at Ardglass. The two lines in County Donegal are to be constructed on a three-feet gauge, all the others being on the ordinary gauge of 5 feet 3 inches. The three Mayo lines and the Galway and Clifden will be worked in connection with the Midland Great Western system, the two in Kerry with that of the Great Southern and Western. The Cork and Bandon Railway take over the two Cork lines, and the Belfast and County Down Railway that to Ardglass. It is understood that the Waterford and Limerick Company are prepared to undertake to work the Collooney and Claremorris line, the agreement being still under consideration. It will also be seen from the tabular statement that these lines reach the important fishing grounds on the west coast, off Killybegs, Achill, Killala Bay, Clifden and adjacent stations, Kenmare, Valencia, and Bantry Bay, together with Baltimore in the south and Ardglass on the east coast, and will, therefore, afford to these places such facilities for sending their fish to the best markets as they have not hitherto enjoyed, and which may reasonably be expected to lead to a very large development of that important industry.'

Irish Land Purchase Bill.

The Government's Land Purchase Bill was introduced by Mr. Balfour on March 24, 1890. Its second reading was moved on April 21. Its rejection was moved by Mr. Parnell, who was defeated by 348 to 268. But the carriage of the Bill, and of other Government measures in this Session, was made impossible by the disturbance which their unexpected licensing proposals effected in the progress of business in the House of Commons. Partly, in order to overtake the arrears of work thus caused, and partly to meet the general desire for an earlier prorogation in the summer, Parliament was called together for its next Session on November 25. Mr. Balfour promptly introduced his Bills. Their course through the House was immensely facilitated by the verdict in the O'Shea divorce case, and its far-reaching consequences. Mr. Balfour had divided his former Bill into two separate ones—the Land Purchase Bill and the Congested Districts Bill. English Radicals opposed the first reading of the former, and were beaten by 268 votes

to 117, Mr. Parnell and twenty-five of his followers supporting the Government, while Mr. Gladstone, Sir W. Harcourt, and Mr. Morley walked out of the House without voting. The second reading was carried on December 3 by 268 to 130 votes.

Split in the Irish Party after the O'Shea Divorce Case.

It is necessary to allude here to the political consequences of the O'Shea case. Immediately after the trial the Irish Nationalist members held an enthusiastic meeting in Dublin, and through the mouths of Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Sexton, and Mr. Healy, declared their unabated confidence in Mr. Parnell. On November 22 they held their customary meeting at the House of Commons for the election of their officers, and then Mr. Parnell, who on entering the room was cordially received, was unanimously re-elected chairman of the party. But in the meanwhile the 'Nonconformist conscience' had become uneasy, and on the 24th Mr. Gladstone wrote to Mr. John Morley saying that Mr. Parnell's 'continuance at the present moment in the leadership would be productive of consequences disastrous in the highest degree to the cause of Ireland.' Then followed the angry debates in Committee Room No. 15, which engrossed the attention of the House of Commons, and enabled the public business of the House to be proceeded with with extraordinary rapidity through that winter Session. The immediate result of these debates was the severance of the Nationalist Party into two sections—the larger under the nominal leadership of Mr. McCarthy, which desired to act in close harmony with the Gladstonians; the smaller under Mr. Parnell, which claimed to be independent of any British party. From that moment till the end of the Parliament the old power of the Irish Party in the House of Commons had gone. Its strength had lain in its perfect discipline, in the constancy in the attendance of its members, in their unbroken obedience to the iron will of one resolute leader. Henceforth there was no real heart in their tactics; and as, in consequence of the split, their money supplies began to fail them, the attendance of Irish members became

smaller and smaller, and less and less constant. Mr. Sexton, it is true, throughout the remainder of the Parliament has remained steadily in his place, and has shown consummate Parliamentary ability; but he does not seem to have a following, and of the other leading Nationalists, neither Mr. McCarthy, nor Mr. Healy, nor Mr. Dillon, nor Mr. O'Brien, has shown any capacity since that time for Parliamentary leadership; while Mr. J. Redmond, who has spoken with effect, has been but little in the House. In fact, from the date of the disruption of the old Nationalist Party, it is not Irish questions which have excited with living interest the House of Commons. Twice only since then have incidents in Irish debates aroused attention. The first was in the debate on the Address at the beginning of the Session of 1892, when Mr. J. Redmond directly challenged the Gladstonian leaders to indicate the nature of their Home Rule proposals. The second was at the conclusion of the second reading debate on the Irish Local Government Bill, when Mr. Gladstone attacked Lord Salisbury's references to the attitude of Ulster, and Mr. Balfour answered him with conspicuous courage and ability. And the interest on both these occasions was excited because of the ulterior, and electioneering, import of the incident. Otherwise since that date it is British social questions—such as those involved in Mr. Channing's motion on the Hours of Railway Servants, and Mr. Buxton's on Government Contracts, and the Railway Directors' Privilege Case—which have really excited the House of Commons.

Public Expenditure for Relief of Irish Distress.

The fears that had been entertained of distress in Ireland from a failure of the potato crop were partially realized. Mr. Balfour in the autumn visited the districts affected, and had conferences on the spot with the local authorities and the priests. Everywhere he was received with courtesy, and in many places with evident gratitude and admiration. In the House of Commons on December 4, he moved, in Committee of Supply, a supplementary vote of £5,000 for relief works, and took the opportunity of describing in detail the proposals of the Government for dealing with the dis-

tress. This was merely a small instalment of the sum eventually voted by Parliament for this purpose. Parliamentary Papers, No. 85, Session 1892, show that in 24 unions of 9 counties 161 works were undertaken, and that the sum of £160,570 was expended :

County.	Union.	No. of Works.	Wages.	Supervision and Material.	Totals.
Donegal	...	2	8	£ 7,864	£ 1,249
Clare	...	1	3	315	73
Kerry	...	1	2	255	134
Cavan	...	1	1	269	101
Sligo	...	2	3	1,002	730
Galway	...	4	37	45,647	10,090
Cork	...	5	24	22,842	5,155
Mayo	...	8	83	50,304	14,540
		24	161	128,498	32,072
					160,570

'In addition to the sum of £160,570 shown on this return, expenditure was incurred on the hire of steamers for service on the west coast of Ireland, for the purchase of land and forestry operations thereon in Galway, for the services of Royal Engineer officers and county surveyors, for inspectors and others employed under the Land Commission and Local Government Board in connection with the administration of the Seed Potato Supply Acts, and extra cost of works on railways attributable to relief operations.'

A correspondent of the *Times*, who accompanied Mr. Balfour on his tour a year ago, supplied particulars as the result of a second visit he had paid to some of the scheduled districts of Donegal, Galway, and Mayo, and the adjacent islands off the coast. Writing from Westport, county Mayo, on November 28, he says :

'The money has been spent to the best possible advantage. In proof of this it may be noted that fourteen of the works carried out in Galway, Mayo, and Clare, which were measured up and valued at £23,400 by Mr. Hill, surveyor of the last-

named county, who is unquestionably one of the most experienced men in Ireland, were completed for £21,800, including wages, supervision, and materials. Of course, the first object in view was the immediate

RELIEF OF THE THOUSANDS OF POOR PEASANTS

who were threatened with famine. It is satisfactory, however, to know that while that object has been attained with signal success, there has been an entire absence of useless and extravagant expenditure or relief of an eleemosynary character. The Government were on the alert long before the period of actual distress arrived, and thus, when it did come, they had all their plans matured. The number of persons in each locality who would be likely to require assistance was not only estimated beforehand, but reports had been prepared setting forth their names and circumstances. Such works as were best calculated to afford the necessary employment, while conferring permanent benefit on the inhabitants, had been mapped out in good time by an experienced officer, Major Peacocke, R.E., to whom, also, was entrusted the duty, in conjunction with the county surveyors and police authorities, of organizing the requisite staff of overseers, gangers, and supervisors. As these works were intended for the relief of those who lived in very remote districts, and who could not avail themselves of the employment offered on the State railways by reason of the distances at which they lived from the routes of the proposed lines, there was frequently considerable difficulty experienced in finding suitable work of a remunerative description close at hand. Many portions of the distressed districts, especially the mountainous parts, were, however, in want of good roads. Other portions were practically isolated at certain periods of the year owing to the absence of bridges, while the people living on the seaboard, and who largely depended on the fishing industry, required boat-slips, harbours, etc. It is pleasing, therefore, to be assured that not only have the works carried on in these places during the present year been the means of saving many thousands of poor people from starvation, but that this will prove of

LASTING SERVICE TO THE INHABITANTS,

and help to open up some of the most picturesque spots on the western coast, hitherto practically unknown to the outside world. It was at first intended that these relief works should be merely auxiliaries to the large railway works now in progress ; but after the lapse of a short period, it was found that the relative magnitude of the two works had been reversed—that while the number of persons employed on the railways never exceeded

8,000, the total number of applicants for employment in the relief works rose as high as 16,000. In order to prevent imposition through the employment of undeserving people, the most stringent supervision became necessary. The lists of distressed persons, previously prepared, after careful inquiry, by the police and the other local authorities, were strictly adhered to, and it was found that this plan was very successful. The labourers were divided into two classes. The first-class were paid in cash at rates varying from 1s. 2d. a day for able-bodied men, with 1s. 6d. a week for lodgings, if they came more than five miles from their homes, to 8d. a day for boys under sixteen. The second-class labourers were paid in kind at the rate of six stones of Indian meal or its equivalent in flour per week, by means of cheques on local tradesmen. The police were required to report to the Government weekly as to the price and quality of the stores sold in their district, and to inquire into any cause of complaint. When the season for gathering seaweed for manure and the seed-time arrived, it was found necessary to adopt strong measures before the people could be taught the necessity of looking to the future. The attraction of fairly remunerative wages in the works would have been sufficient to induce them to neglect their own interests, and to let the time pass for cultivating their little plots of land. They were not allowed, however, to follow this foolish course. Their hours were shortened, and some of the men were compelled to devote even half their time to their own affairs. It is to be hoped that this lesson in thrift, brought so forcibly before them, will not be soon forgotten. With the money which they earned at the works, as well as with grants from the fund, amounting to over £50,000, collected by Lord Zetland and Mr. Balfour, for those unable to work, the people purchased potatoes and other seeds of the best quality, that the local authorities could procure. The season has, fortunately, been favourable, and the result is that at present peasants along the whole of the West coast find themselves in a position of comparative affluence, and with brighter prospects than they have known for many years past. They are naturally a grateful people.

GRATITUDE TO MR. BALFOUR.

I was quite prepared to hear them allude to Mr. Balfour in terms of gratitude, but it would be difficult to convey any idea of the warmth with which they spoke of that distinguished statesman, or the fervour of the prayers which those poor peasants mingled with their references to the right hon. gentleman. I was not a little puzzled, at first, to know in what light to regard the observation of an old gentleman, who shouted from a field by the wayside to a lad who was lazily contemplating a pig with long

legs and lanky sides which careered along the road in front of my vehicle, "Arrah, Mike, will ye stir yourself? Don't ye see Arthur James running away?" I discovered afterwards that the little articles which the relief works had enabled them to add to their miserable stock of furniture, and sometimes even an implement of agriculture of a better class than they had hitherto been able to afford, were often named after the First Lord of the Treasury. Mr. Balfour was the first British statesman that many of these people had ever heard of, and certainly the first that any of them had ever seen. They fully expected they would have had another visit from the Chief Secretary before the works closed, and they expressed themselves greatly disappointed that they had not an opportunity of showing their gratitude. I heard of one exception, and one only, in the whole of the distressed districts.

"Don't thank me," said Major Peacocke to an intelligent fellow who had been profuse in his expressions of gratitude; "thank Mr. Balfour."

"Well, sir," he replied, hat in hand, "if you don't mind, I would rather thank God for having put the good into his heart."

In addition to the making of new roads and the repairing of old ones which had become almost useless, through neglect, the works have included many much-needed piers, boat-slips, and sea-walls, and some of the better class of bridges. The manner in which operations have been carried out shows how quickly these uneducated people can be taught, when directed by skilful men like the Royal Engineers, who acted as instructors under the county surveyors. Great, too, as was the necessity for many of the works on the mainland, it would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of the improvements which a comparatively small expenditure has effected on the islands lying along the coast. The only islands which Mr. Balfour visited were M'Weevish and Achill. The Chief Secretary was only able to proceed as far as the little fishing hamlet of Dooega, on the southern shore of Achill, and even to that point, which is not half-way across the island, Miss Balfour and the rest of the party were obliged to proceed on foot over a mountain-path, the car-road having terminated a couple of miles away. The road has now been completed, not only in Dooega, but around one of the most attractive parts of the bold coast-line, opening up a new tourist route, which is likely to prove very attractive. Mr. Balfour's attention was called to a dangerous causeway or passage over a swamp dividing two parts of the island, and he promised to have

A BRIDGE CONSTRUCTED AT HIS OWN EXPENSE.

This work has also been carried out, and Balfour Bridge has proved a great boon to the people. The railway near, being constructed from Westport to Achill Sound, will not only enable the Achill islanders to find a ready market for their fish, but it will facilitate the carrying out of the idea so long entertained by Mr. Jackson of placing steamers in Blacksod Bay for the purpose of opening up Westport to the fishermen living in the Mullet. M'Weevish Island is sufficiently close to the mainland that it can be approached by a long causeway. This has been widened, and now admits of carts passing from the mainland, so that M'Weevish has practically ceased to be an island. Very important works have also been carried out on North and South Inniskea Islands, Arran, Clare, Innisturk, Innisboffin, and other islands, which were visited by Lord and Lady Zetland and Miss Balfour in the early part of this year. They consist mainly of roads which now render vehicular traffic possible, and boat-slips and shelters for the hardy fishermen who obtain a precarious livelihood along this tempestuous coast. Now that safe landing-places have been provided, and good roads made through these islands, they will, no doubt, in future receive some of the advantages arising from the tourist traffic, which has increased greatly throughout Connemara and all the Western Highlands since Mr. Balfour, by his historic visits, attracted universal attention to this remote and lovely country.'—*Times*, November 30.

That the people benefited by these works are sensible of the good work accomplished is shown by the following fact. Mr. Dillon, M.P., criticising in a speech the expenditure in Mayo, remarked that he had never asked for the expenditure, and that the people of Ireland regretted it; whereupon the Swinford Board of Guardians held a meeting at which fifteen elected members (and no ex-officio members) were present, and passed a resolution giving a most sharp and peremptory contradiction to Mr. Dillon's statement that the people of Ireland regretted the relief expenditure. Their resolution expressed the most cordial recognition of Mr. Balfour's timely help, which alone prevented, they say, real famine in the district, and they went on to speak in the following terms of Mr. Dillon's attitude: 'Mr. Dillon's assertion that he never asked for the railway may be true. He does not appear to ask for much that would be for the benefit of his constituents; and although we have been granted this boon, unsought for by our Member of Parliament, we beg to thank

Mr. Balfour for it again. And we beg further to express our disapprobation of that manner of representation which consists in standing aloof while our people are in the grip of famine, and only coming forward to interfere when it is supposed that political capital can be manufactured out of untrue and carping criticism of the man who put bread into the mouths of the hungry.'

But it was advisable to supplement the Government expenditure by voluntary funds, and early in January, 1891, Lord Zetland and Mr. Balfour issued an appeal for money. It was largely responded to in Great Britain, and the appended leading article from the *Times* summarizes the mode in which it was expended.

'The official Report, just printed, on the administration of the Irish Distress Fund shows exactly the circumstances under which the fund was started, the forms of distress which it was especially intended to relieve, the agents employed, and the rules adopted in distributing it, and the very marked success with which the work of relief has been carried through. The fund, it will be remembered, was inaugurated in January, 1891, by a joint letter put out by Lord Zetland and Mr. Balfour, calling public attention to the existence of grave distress in Ireland, due very largely to the failure of the potato crop. The West of Ireland was the part in which there was the chief suffering, and though in many parts of the affected districts there was actual or prospective help secured by the railways work and relief works for which special Parliamentary votes had been obtained, yet there were places and forms of distress which these did not reach, and for which, in consequence, some further supplementary relief was needed. An appeal thus authenticated was quite certain to be promptly and generously met. Contributions to the fund flowed in at once. More than four thousand pounds had been sent in at the date at which the letter was published. Nearly the same amount was received on the day following. Within the first week more than £20,000 stood to the credit of the fund, and this was finally raised to £50,287 os. 7d. in money, and donations of clothing representing about 14,000 children's garments were also forwarded to Lady Zetland and Miss Balfour.

'The question next arose by what agency this fund could be most usefully employed in accordance with the principles laid down in the joint letter of January, 1891. The first thing to be secured was that it must not be so administered as to give encouragement to professional mendicancy—a result which had,

in fact, followed from much of the charitable expenditure in past periods. Nor was it found easy to estimate, with any approach to accuracy, the amount of the prevalent distress in the several districts in which the fund was to be spent. Exaggerated accounts were sent in, not only by the expectant recipients, but from seemingly well-informed sources, and this not from any deliberate intention to mislead, but because, as the letter suggested, habits of severe and disciplined accuracy are not the most common characteristics of the Irish people of any class. Then there was the further point to be borne in mind that there was relief already going on through the railway works and relief works, and it was necessary to take care that the Distress Fund did not clash with these, or allow any persons to receive as charity what they could, if they so pleased, earn as wages by work. It was finally settled that the operations of the fund were to be carried on under the following heads: Relief was to be given to distressed and helpless families; poor children in the schools were to be supplied with food and clothing; and special supplementary grants were to be bestowed where a special case could be made out for them, either in relief of distress or in aid of self-help by the development of local industries. The office of the fund was established at Dublin Castle, and the administration of it was placed under the supervision of three chief inspectors and their assistants—one for the North-West district, including the counties of Donegal, Mayo, and Sligo; one for the Western district, including Galway and Roscommon; and one for the South-Western district, including Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, and Tipperary. These divisions make up conjointly the districts in most urgent need of relief. They form together nearly one-half of the total area of the country. In some of them the potato crop of the autumn of 1890 had averaged from one-half to one-third of the ordinary yield; in others, and especially in the congested and poverty-stricken districts on the Atlantic seaboard, where the potato still forms the staple food of the people, the crop had been no more than a bare one-fourth of the usual return. The apportionment of the relief in these districts was, as might be expected, a matter of no small difficulty. The method adopted was as follows: In the first place, provisional lists of distressed and helpless families were obtained through the local constabulary, and these were then revised by the chief inspectors, aided by local committees, at each of which the clergy of all denominations, the dispensary doctor, and the relieving officer were invited to attend. The result of these detailed inquiries was that some names were struck off the lists and others added. The final settlement was left to the chief inspectors, and all applications received at the central office on behalf of persons not already included were also forwarded to

them. These applications came in in abundance from all parts of the country, some from persons clearly ineligible under the rules of relief, others where the cases stated seemed to call for consideration. The relief, it was determined, was to be given only in kind—so much Indian meal, or its equivalent in flour or oatmeal, according to the number of persons in the family ; and this was given by relief cheques, issued weekly, and entitling their holders to obtain meal from any local trader. This system, we are told, gave general satisfaction. Each family relieved was enabled to deal with whom it liked ; trade was thus kept in its natural channels, and the local traders, obtaining monthly cash payments, were substantially benefited by the transactions. In carrying out and supervising these arrangements, great help was given by the Royal Irish Constabulary. They first assisted in preparing the provisional lists ; the distribution of the weekly relief cheques was a further work which they undertook ; they also kept an eye on the operation of the fund, so as to discover and put a stop to any instances of abuse, and to keep the chief inspectors regularly supplied with information as to the quality and price of the goods furnished to the cheque-holders. These and other duties, entailing considerable extra work, were gratuitously discharged, and we learn with pleasure that during the whole period of relief no complaint reached the Distress Office as to the manner in which the duties were performed. It was under this first heading of the relief of distressed and helpless families that the chief expenditure was incurred. The total amount which thus passed, directly or indirectly, through the hands of the constabulary was upwards of thirty thousand pounds. The outlay incurred by them in the several processes was only £126 17s. 5d., or 8s. 6d. per £100—a fact which proves that no small part of the expense of relief was paid out of their own pockets by the officers and men of the force.

‘ The relief granted to children in the schools was in the form either of food or of clothing. The total sum expended in grants for food was £8,673 1s. 1d. The clothing was very largely supplied by special gifts in kind, and these were supplemented by the purchase of goods to the amount of £1,608 11s. 10d. in all. The total number of garments distributed was 28,768. This branch of the work was greatly facilitated by the cordial co-operation of such of the school managers as were willing to avail themselves of the help offered by the fund. They were not all thus willing. Eighty-eight of them refused help for the children under their charge, some through fear that the distribution of food might interfere with the educational efficiency of the school ; some few based their objection on political grounds, refusing to accept assistance which came from members of the Government ; others either refused without assigning reasons,

or sent no answer to the Distress Office. The miscellaneous supplemental grants are, some of them, set down under the title of compassionate grants, given in consequence of information gained by the visits of Lord and Lady Zetland and Miss Balfour to the distressed districts. The reception given to the visitors by the people of the districts to which they came was most cordial, and the addresses presented by all classes and denominations clearly proved their grateful recognition of what was being done for them. The grants for the development of industries will, it is hoped, be productive of permanent benefit. The needlework classes which were started with help from the fund are still in many instances going on independently, under the supervision of the ladies who were instrumental in forming them. The general result of the fund has thus been satisfactory in every way. It has proved to be the means of tiding over a great crisis ; it has preserved from the extremity of want a large number of families who would not have been reached by help in any other form ; and it has done something to set going an industrial movement which promises to be of permanent benefit. The statements of accounts appended to the Report show that the total net amount of the fund was £49,067 8s. 5d., of which £2,714 18s. 9d. remains as an unspent balance. The rest has been laid out as follows, viz. : £40,603 19s. 1d. in direct relief to helpless families and in food and clothing for schools ; £335 18s. 6d. in supplemental miscellaneous grants ; £3,335 6s. 3d in the development of industries and in relief works ; while the total cost of the administration of the fund in all its departments has been £2,077 5s. 10d. for salaries, printing and stationery, and incidental expenses.'

The Land Purchase Bill and its Operation.

In 1891, in the House of Commons, the Land Purchase Bill occupied much time in Committee. Under this Bill the total amount which can be advanced is £33,000,000. As Radicals are fond of ignorantly asserting that it is inconsistent for Unionists to have opposed the Gladstonian Land Purchase scheme of 1886, and to be supporters of this Act, it is well to quote two letters written on this point.

Mr. R. P. Martin, of Chesham, having drawn Mr. Balfour's attention to certain statements made by Mr. Mundella when addressing his constituents at Sheffield, received the following letter :

‘ Irish Office, September 16, 1890.

‘ DEAR SIR,—Mr. Balfour has desired me to reply to your letter, in which you enclose an extract from a report of a speech

delivered by Mr. Mundella. The report must, I am forced to think, be inaccurate, so astonishing is the account there given of the two schemes for land purchase in Ireland brought forward, the one in 1886 by Mr. Gladstone, and the other in 1890 by Mr. Balfour. We are told that the object of both schemes was to buy out the Irish landlords. This is, no doubt, a fair description of Mr. Gladstone's primary object. He held that a moral obligation lay upon the framers of a Home Rule Bill to provide a means of escape for all landlords who did not care to abide the issue of that experiment. It is not a fair description of the aim of the Government.

'The buying out of the Irish landlords was merely incidental to Mr. Balfour's scheme, the primary object of which was to enable the Irish tenant of a landlord willing to sell to buy his landlord's interest for whatever he thought it might be worth. Passing from the relatively unimportant comparison of the ends contemplated to the contrast of the means adopted in the two schemes, I find that especial emphasis is laid upon the liability and risk incurred by the English taxpayer under each. The rosy view of his safety under the one, his dark prospects under the other, are at once the most striking and the most incredible features in Mr. Mundella's picture. It would, indeed, be hard to conceive a more misleading account of the security under Mr. Gladstone's scheme, or one more inaccurate of the security under Mr. Balfour's, than those here put forward for the sake of effective contrast. Let us examine the first.

'We are told that in the Bill of 1886 Mr. Gladstone proposed to have the whole revenue of Ireland as security, and an Irish Parliament to endorse that security, with the whole of the Irish people liable to taxation to pay up any deficiency. In a sense this is true. But, so far from allaying the distrust of the British taxpayer, these very provisions are calculated to arouse in him no other sentiments than those of acute and well-founded alarm. Three several levies upon the Irish population were contemplated in the Bill of 1886—first, Imperial taxes; second, instalments upon the capital advanced for land purchase; third, the taxes imposed by the Irish Parliament for affairs exclusively Irish. All sums collected upon each of these accounts were to be paid into the hands of a Receiver-General. It was then his duty to pay over in full—first, the Imperial contribution due to the Exchequer; and secondly, the interest and sinking fund of the money advanced for land purchase. The extremely problematical residue was, lastly, to be returned to the Irish Parliament for the conduct of Irish affairs. In gauging the merits of the scheme, four things must be borne in mind: (1) That the wish for Home Rule is, according to Home Rule leaders, largely based on the desire of Ireland to tax herself with a view to

developing her industrial resources ; (2) that the Imperial contribution claimed from Ireland was declared by Irish members to be far too large ; (3) that the universal price of twenty years' purchase for all Irish land is declared by the same authorities to be too high ; (4) that the danger of repudiation is not an economical, but a political danger. In the light of these four facts many are found to doubt the advantage of having an Irish Parliament to endorse the security—that is to say, of giving an enormous power to a political assembly whose chief desire is to spend money on Ireland, and of declaring at the same time that not a penny shall they spend until they have disgorged an Imperial tax and a land tax, both of which they consider excessive and unfair.

Turning now to the account of the security under the Bill of 1890, we find the following astounding statement : "That the land was to be sold, and the tenant to pay the capital advanced in instalments over forty-nine years, without any security whatever but the land itself." In the first place, it is not the land that is to be sold, but the landlord's interest in it alone ; and of this interest only four-fifths are advanced by the Exchequer, with, for security, the whole value of the land, including the interest of the landlord and tenant.

This sufficiently flagrant error sinks, however, into absolute insignificance before the amazing statement that the land is the sole security. Omitting, for the sake of argument, such collateral securities as the landlord's fifth, a sum, of course, equal to £6,000,000, if £30,000,000 is advanced, the tenants' insurance and the reserve of £200,000 accumulated from the Exchequer contribution to Ireland, the broad fact remains that the total advance authorized by the Bill did not exceed by one farthing the capitalized value of a guarantee fund composed, not of a revenue raised in Ireland, but of funds annually contributed to Ireland by the Imperial Exchequer.

Under the scheme of the Government, the British taxpayer relied, in order to recover his money, not upon the endorsement of the security by an Irish Parliament, but on the simpler device of keeping it in his pocket.

"Yours faithfully,
GEORGE WYNDHAM."

(*Times*, September 30, 1890.)

In the course of a letter dated April 21, 1891, Mr. Balfour writes with reference to Mr. Gladstone's criticism on the Irish Land Purchase Bill :

"He objects to a scheme involving a liability which "begins at 30 millions," and which, he asserts, may "reach 100 millions" ;

though he himself is the author of a scheme under which the liability began at 50 millions and might have reached 150 millions. He regards a policy as intolerable which would meet default on the part of the purchasers by evictions ; but he was himself the author of a scheme by which this intolerable policy was forced upon the nascent energies of the Irish executive which he desired to call into existence. He objects to the Bill because it takes as security for the Treasury property belonging to persons who are not first consulted as to their willingness to become parties to such a transaction. But he himself was the author of a Bill, open, in a far greater degree, to a similar objection. The Bill of the Government, no doubt, requires the locality to mortgage a portion of its resources to cover the Treasury loan. But those resources are not private property. They are not even drawn from the rates. They are contributions to the rates by the British taxpayer, while the chance of their being drawn upon to any serious extent, even in case of default, is remote and dubious. Mr. Gladstone's Bill, on the other hand, required the tenants of Ireland, at the dictation of their landlords, to buy, whether they liked it or not, at a price which they had no voice in fixing, thus making themselves personally and immediately responsible for forty-nine years, and to the whole extent of their property, for the punctual payment of their annuities to the Irish Treasury. And not content with compelling the tenants to buy, he compelled the Irish Legislature to pledge on their behalf every shilling of Irish revenue, whether that revenue was or was not contributed by the classes who have an immediate interest in agrarian questions. Finally, his followers are opposing, line by line and clause by clause, a measure accepted in its main principles by every section of every Irish party, eagerly desired by the great bulk of the Irish agricultural community, and involving no risk, theoretical or practical, to the British taxpayer. If it involves, as it certainly does involve, the pledging of British credit, the social ends which it is calculated to attain are assuredly worthy of the employment even of this great instrument—an instrument to the use of which Mr. Gladstone himself was committed, and to which not a week ago he declared Ireland was "justly entitled."—*Times*, April 23.

In the debate on the Address at the commencement of the Session of 1892, it was roundly asserted by Mr. Sexton that this Act had proved to be a failure. Following him in the debate on March 29, Mr. T. W. Russell thus dealt with this assertion :

‘ What had the Land Purchase Acts done, in spite of the hon. members below the gangway ? Up to March 1 last, under these

Acts, 23,781 loans had been actually sanctioned by the Land Commission. That meant that 23,781 freeholders had been created. A good deal had been said about Ulster; and he would show that that province had not fared badly in the general division. Out of the 23,781 freeholders created, 12,554 had been in Ulster, 3,839 in Leinster, 4,496 in Munster, and 2,892 in Connaught. No one, therefore, could say that Ulster had been deprived of its fair share of the benefits from the Acts. (Cheers.) Then as to the working of the present Act. The resolution was declared to be for the purpose of making operative an Act which was practically inoperative, and it had several times been asserted in the House—notably by the hon. member for West Belfast in his speech on the Address—that the Act was a failure. The number of applications for loans under the Act were paraded before the House as though the figures were complete evidence of failure. When the measure was passing through the House of Commons there was a surplus of three-quarters of a million under the old Ashbourne Acts not disposed of, and the Government at first proposed to amalgamate that surplus with the Land Purchase Bill. Finally, however, it was decided to leave the money where it was, and allow it to be worked out. Now, what had taken place since August last, when the Bill became law? In August there were 456 applications for loans, amounting to £187,151; in September there were 982 applications, amounting to £343,544; in October there were 216 applications, amounting to £80,981; in November there were 69 applications, amounting to £32,282; and in December there were 64 applications, amounting to £9,101. Thus the total under the Ashbourne Acts during the last five months of 1891 was 1,787 applications for a gross sum of £653,059. Next, what happened in the last three months under the new Act? In October there were four applications for loans, amounting to £943; in November 66 applications, amounting to £35,924; and in December there were 105 applications, amounting to £79,584. Thus the total for the three months under the new Act was 175 applications for £116,451 (cheers); and the grand total under the various Acts from August to December was 1,962 applications for £769,510. It was therefore impossible to say that the operation of land purchase was not, up to December, 1891, going forward as rapidly as it had ever done before. (Cheers.) It was perfectly natural that the tenants and the landlords should strive to get under the old Act as long as possible, for it gave them more beneficial terms than the new Act. (Hear, hear.) In the six years there had been 29,385 applications altogether, giving an average of 4,897 per annum, or of 408 per month. Therefore, the average number of applications for five months of those six years would

be 2,040 ; and the last five months of 1891 gave 1,962. Therefore, whatever had become of the new Land Purchase Act, the operation of purchase was going on as rapidly as ever, and there was no symptom of failure. (Hear, hear.) He would now turn to another set of figures. Up to December 31, 1891, there had been only about 200 applications under the new Act ; but he had asked the Chief Secretary for the figures up to the most recent date, and he found that up to yesterday—therefore, for a period practically of three months, because the Act was not made use of before—there had been 1,253 applications for loans amounting to £444,612. (Cheers.) It turned out, then, that the Act which hon. members below the gangway, and even right hon. members above the gangway, had so precipitately pronounced to be a failure was nothing of the kind. (Cheers.) They had been a little too premature, and these figures demonstrated that the operation of purchase for the last three months had been going on more rapidly than at any period under the Ashbourne Acts. (Loud cheers.)

At the beginning of this quotation, Mr. Russell gives the latest returns of the working of the Ashbourne Acts. It is interesting to supplement those figures with the following, which show how the instalments of purchase-money have been repaid. The total amount of instalments which became due for the five and a half years to May 1, 1891, was £639,388. Of this, at the beginning of this year, there remained due £1,500. There became due on December 1, 1891, £129,882, and in the course of that month the Commissioners had received £104,000 of it.

Collapse of the Plan of Campaign in 1891.

In Ireland the most conspicuous proof of the continued improvement was afforded by the collapse of the Plan of Campaign at the crucial point of conflict, Tipperary. On May 29 the *Times* correspondent reported :

‘ The deputation of the Tipperary tenants who went to Chester for the purpose of settling with Mr. Smith-Barry obtained from him the terms on which he would consent to allow them to go back to their holdings. The terms are substantially as follows : Allowance to agricultural tenants the same as in 1889 ; the town tenants to have their rents individually considered and revised where necessary ; agricultural tenants to be allowed to go to the Land Court for revision. Mr. Smith-Barry will restore the

tenants to their former position in ground-rent cases, costs only between party and party to be borne by the tenants ; tenants to pay half arrears on going back, and pass a bill for the remainder, payable six months after date. These conditions only hold good if accepted before June 1. It is said that Mr. Smith-Barry exhibited no anxiety to have the terms accepted, believing the offer to be a liberal one. A telegram from Tipperary to-night states that the majority of the tenants have accepted the terms, and are now engaged in returning to their former holdings. Some individuals personally interested in New Tipperary are opposed to the settlement, but at a public meeting last night the foregoing proposals were submitted and unanimously accepted. Gratitude was expressed to the gentlemen who formed the deputation to Chester. The town to-day looked bright and busy, and the several shops reopened did good business. Everybody is relieved to find that "mad Tipperary" has been restored to reason.'

On November 24 Mr. Robert Popham Bell, J.P., county Tipperary, writes to the *Times* :

'I have been residing for many years close to Tipperary, and am therefore intimately acquainted with the people. I am very sorry to say great distress prevails amongst many of Mr. Smith-Barry's tenants who left their houses and farms, and though many have returned to their holdings, they have lost the savings of a lifetime ; others, through absolute want, cannot return ; and in some cases those who two years ago had flourishing businesses are now ruined. I do not refer to those who were boycotted for refusing to go out of their farms and shops, but to those who joined in the agitation, and who are now left almost to starve.'

The following is significant of the changed feeling in the place :

' Lieutenant-Colonel Caddell, late resident magistrate in Tipperary, has received the following address from householders of the town and the neighbourhood, chiefly tenants on the Smith-Barry estate :

"DEAR SIR,—We, the undersigned inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Tipperary, do not wish you to depart without expressing our grateful acknowledgment of the kindly services you have rendered in bringing about a settlement of the unhappy rent dispute in Tipperary. Only a short time amongst us, we came to learn your friendly intentions, that it was your great desire to assist in re-establishing peace in our

town, and to restore it to its former position of prosperity. Recognising the sincerity of your action, we co-operated with you in your efforts to effect an amicable settlement, which we are convinced, if further delayed, would bring ruin to our fine town and poverty to its people. Owing largely to your exertions, persevered in amidst great difficulties, Tipperary town has been saved, and its inhabitants have re-entered on the path of peace, prosperity, and happiness." Here follow seventy-five signatures.'

Coming to a later date, and answering a question in the House of Commons, the Attorney-General for Ireland was able to state that on April 1, 1892, there were five persons in custody under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887. They were convicted of riot and unlawful assembly. There are no persons either wholly or partially boycotted in Ireland at the present time.

The Irish Local Government Bill, 1892.

In the Session of 1892, the main Irish measures of the Government were the Local Government Bill and the Irish National Education Bill.

The Irish Local Government Bill was introduced by Mr. Balfour on February 18. In a dispassionate speech he denied that it was brought forward in any way as an alternative to Home Rule. Its object was to give to Ireland popularly elected local bodies for the transaction of local business. By it both County and Baronial Councils would be elected, the latter corresponding to the proposed District Councils for England. Their members would be elected by the democratic Parliamentary suffrage. To them would be transferred all the functions at present discharged by the Grand Juries, with other duties in addition. In fact, the Irish County Councils would have powers in connection with the administration of woods and forests, of infirmaries, of the Factory Acts, and under the sanitary laws, which are not possessed by the English County Councils. The safeguards proposed by the Bill for the protection of minorities, and for the prevention of the abuse of their powers by corrupt or partisan councils, were these: (1) The exclusion of illiterates from the franchise. (2) The cumulative system

of voting as it exists in School Board elections in England. (3) The creation in each county of a Joint Committee, composed of seven nominees of the County Council, and of seven nominees of the Grand Jury, whose consent should be requisite to any capital expenditure proposed by any County Council. (4) The power given to twenty cess-payers by petition to a Judge of Assize to arraign before two Judges a County Council on the charge of persistent disobedience to the law, or of malversation, or of oppression. On proof of any of these charges the councillors responsible are to be removed, and their places filled by persons appointed by the Lord-Lieutenant.

It was received by every section of the Opposition with 'vacant laughter and inarticulate indignation.' Mr. J. Morley, rising immediately after Mr. Balfour, said: 'The country will see through this monstrous imposture, and will see that the measure you have brought in containing such a proposal as that is a mockery of the House of Commons, and a falsification of your pledges, and is a just ground for new and fresh irritation in Ireland.' Sir W. Harcourt said: 'A more insulting Bill to the people of Ireland—more insulting in its provisions, and in the manner in which it has been introduced—cannot be imagined,' while Mr. J. McCarthy and Mr. J. Redmond endeavoured to excel one another in their vituperation of the Bill. Mr. Redmond called it 'a sham and an insult.' Mr. McCarthy said 'Irish members ought to have nothing to do with it, and that they ought to proclaim this feeling from the beginning and reject the unclean thing.' He would like to give only one piece of advice to Mr. Balfour, and that was, 'Take your Bill, and put it into the fire.'

The debate on the second reading began on May 19, and was concluded on the 24th. Its rejection was moved by Mr. Sexton, who was supported in this course by both sections of the Nationalists and by the Gladstonians. The Bill, on the other hand, received the cordial support of the Ulster Unionist members, and of the Liberal Unionist Party. In support of the contention that in the creation of popularly elected local councils in Ireland some safeguards were necessary, (1) the actual misdeeds of Irish local bodies in the past were recounted, and (2) the express in-

tention, authoritatively announced, of the Nationalist Party to abuse the powers to be given to such bodies in the future was insisted upon. As to (1), some of the instances referred to were these: In 1884, when the normal rate of relief in the Roscommon Union was from 1s. 6d. to 3s., that Board of Guardians gave £1 a week to the families of suspects, although they were people possessing land and stock. In 1886 Mr. J. Morley obtained a grant of £20,000 for relief for certain unions. In six weeks the number of persons in receipt of relief in those unions rose from 1,000 to 100,000, and £36,000 was spent on the security of the £20,000. As an example of oppression, on September 19, 1890, the Tipperary Board of Guardians unanimously passed a resolution expressing approval of boycotting and the Plan of Campaign. In carrying out the Labourers Acts, Boards of Guardians had frequently selected the land of obnoxious persons on which to build the cottages. A right of appeal against the decisions of the Boards was given by the Acts of the Privy Council; and out of 227 appeals that were brought, 196 succeeded, on the ground that the selection of the land had been vexatious, or for the purpose of annoyance, punishment, or revenge upon the individual owners.

As to (2), Mr. Balfour said: 'It is undoubtedly the fact that one party in Ireland, largely represented in this House, have announced it to be their intention to use social warfare against a class as a means of obtaining their political object. They do not deny that. They will not deny that they have done their best to carry it out. Is it not absurd to ignore these unconcealed indications of their policy which they have been good enough to give us, and to hand over those classes against which the threats have been used absolutely unprotected?' And more specifically Mr. Chamberlain quoted from *United Ireland* these sentences: 'The grant of Local Government to Ireland would sell the pass as effectually as a Home Rule Parliament,' and, 'We will unscrupulously use every position we can capture, board-room or town-hall, as a Home Rule fortress, and drive the enemy unsparingly off the ground.'

In defence of the two particular safeguards, viz., that of the Joint Committee, and of the power of arraigning and re-

moving a County Council which had been specially attacked, it was argued that the provision as to the Joint Committee was substantially identical with a clause in the Scotch Local Government Act, which created similarly a Joint Committee.

The safeguard was proposed in the case of Ireland because of the great disproportion in most districts between the large number of very small ratepayers and the few land-owners. As Mr. Balfour said, 'You have (in the south and west of Ireland) an enormous number of small occupiers paying annual rates of 4s. and 5s. and 6s. who have from time to time been aided by the establishment of relief works out of public funds, and who are therefore accustomed to look for employment to such works as roads and bridges as part of the ways of satisfying their needs. These men, if it were not for the provision of a Joint Committee, would have adequate power to carry by a vote the establishment of works by which they were going to get relief. They would vote for works on which they could earn 10s. a week, and in one week they might earn seven times, ten times, even fourteen times, as much as they would pay in a year for county cess.' With regard to the proposed power to arraign and remove a County Council proved to have been guilty of malversation, corruption, or oppression, it was pointed out that the Local Government Board in England, as well as in Ireland, had analogous powers of dealing with erring Boards of Guardians, and that the 63rd section of the Education Act of 1870 enacts, 'Where the Education Department are, after such inquiry as they think sufficient, satisfied that a School Board is in default as mentioned in this Act, they may by order declare such Board to be in default, and by the same, or any other order, appoint any persons, not less than five or more than fifteen, to be members of such School Board, and may from time to time remove any member so appointed. . . . After the date of the order of appointment, the persons (if any) who were previously members of the School Board shall be deemed to have vacated their office as if they were dead. . . . The members appointed by the Education Department shall hold office during the pleasure of the Education Department.'

On a division, the second reading was carried by 339 votes to 247, or a majority of 92.

The Irish Education Bill, 1892.

The National Education (Ireland) Bill was introduced by Mr. Jackson, and read a second time on May 30 by 152 votes to 53, given to an evasive amendment moved by an anti-Parnellite. It makes attendance at elementary schools compulsory in all boroughs and townships, and gives an annual grant of £210,000 towards the relief of fees and for the increase of salaries of school-teachers. The latest returns as to illiteracy and attendance of children at school in Ireland demonstrate the necessity for such a measure. According to the last census return there are 78,900 persons in Ireland who could neither read nor write; the percentage of these in the towns was 9·3, in the counties 8·1. While the number of children on the rolls in schools in Ireland is satisfactory, the average percentage of attendance of those, compared with the number on the rolls, is 59; while in England it is 79. The significance of these figures is enhanced when it is noted that before compulsory education in England, the average attendance in Ireland was better than the average attendance in England.

Irish Statistics showing Improvement, 1886-1892.

I append some facts and statistics to illustrate the present comparative prosperity of Ireland in certain specific features:

The *Agricultural returns* show that during these last five years the number of horses has increased from 540,000 to 566,000; of cattle from 4,077,000 to 4,155,000; of sheep from 3,254,000 to 3,697,000; pigs from 1,290,000 to 1,404,000; and poultry from 13,590,000 to 14,615,000. 'During the first five years of the decade,' says Dr. Grimshaw, the Irish Registrar General, 'there were animals equivalent to 5,162,000 grazed on 10,195,000 acres, or at the rate of one beast for every 1·98 acre; during the last half of the decade there were 5,387,000 cattle grazed on 10,066,000 acres, or at the rate of one beast for every 1·87 acre, showing a considerable increase in the density of the stock. Probably,' Dr. Grimshaw goes on to say, 'there is no better proof of the improvement in the management of live stock, and the tendency to increased investment of

capital in live stock in Ireland, than this increase in the utilization of the grazing lands.'

In the *Textile industries* the number of spinning spindles in Ireland in 1885 was 963,031, and in 1890, 970,019. Of doubling spindles there were 30,875 in 1885, against 46,092 in 1890; and of power-looms 25,472 in 1885, against 28,612 in 1890. The total number of persons employed in these textile industries rose from 68,158 in 1885 to 71,788 in 1890.

In *Pauperism* the figures showing the average daily number of persons relieved are these: for the quinquennium 1881-85, 49,552; for the quinquennium 1886-90, 40,633. The expenditure on relief fell from an average of £962,000 in the first period to an average of £864,000 in the second, or a reduction of £100,000 a year.

Railway Statistics.—'Probably,' says Dr. Grimshaw, 'there are not any better tests of the progress of a community than its railway statistics.' These showed, comparing the one period with the other, an increase in the mileage from 2,501 to 2,633; in passengers from 18,884,000 to 19,709,000; in receipts from £2,747,000 to £2,877,000.

Savings Banks.—The average yearly amount of deposits in Trustee and Post Office Saving Banks during the five years of Mr. Gladstone's last Government was £4,124,000. The average during Mr. Balfour's five years of administration has been £5,231,000, or a difference in favour of the second period of £1,107,000.

Evictions.—According to the return of evictions furnished to the House of Commons, there were in 1891 799 cases of tenants finally turned out of their holdings. In 1890 the number was 1,421, as contrasted with 3,781 in 1886, and 3,869 in 1887. The evictions in London for the two years 1889 and 1890 were 6,554, and in 688 cases force was required to give effect to the warrant.

Emigration.—During the five years ending in 1885, 398,658 left Ireland for other countries. For the five years ending in 1890, the number was 335,817, or a diminution of 16 per cent. For the last five years the actual figures are in 1887, 82,923; in 1888, 78,684; in 1889, 70,477; in 1890, 61,313; and last year the number sank to 59,868, less than it has been since 1879.

Results of Unionist Government in Ireland.

Turning from these specific proofs of an improvement in the material condition of the people, let us sum up the broad results of the Irish policy of the Unionist Government. Social order has been re-established, and individual liberty restored. Without a compulsory expropriation or expulsion of the landed gentry, a commencement has been made in the creation by their side of a numerous class of small cultivating owners. The material resources of Ireland have been developed by British wealth. A measure forming county and district local authorities, popularly elected, charged with large functions, has been offered to her. Her national education has been popularized and improved. At the same time the principal allegations by which Home Rule was advocated in 1886 have been refuted by facts. It was alleged that under our democratic party system continuous firm government was impossible, and that, therefore, social order could not be maintained in Ireland. But through the alliance between the two sections of the Unionist Party firm government has been maintained for six years, and, in consequence, social order has been re-established. It was asserted that, however well-intentioned might be the Irish legislation of the Imperial Parliament, it would yet always fail in its objects from our invincible ignorance of Irish needs, and our want of sympathy with Irish ideas. But, in fact, what Act could have succeeded more signally in its specific object than the Coercion Act? What Acts could in practice have worked more smoothly than the Ashbourne Acts? And what legislation and administration combined could be more effective, and even popular, than that by means of which Mr. Balfour grappled with exceptional distress in Ireland, and through which abiding remedies will be applied to some of the permanent causes of her poverty and discontent? It was alleged that 'Ireland blocked the way,' and that the irreconcilable Nationalist members in the House of Commons could and would prevent British legislation. The bare record of British legislation which is set out in the following chapters amply demolishes this allegation.

II.

THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

WHILE it was Mr. Gladstone's sudden conversion to Home Rule which produced the first formal and organized secession from him, and led to the patent disruption of the old Liberal Party, no one who watched carefully the movement of opinion in the English boroughs in 1885 can doubt that his foreign policy had already alienated from him many who had been, and were, sound Liberals in domestic politics, and who were reluctant openly to join the Conservative Party. In fact, while opponents now unite with supporters in lauding the foreign policy of Lord Salisbury, it was difficult then to find a Gladstonian who did not agree with the Conservatives in condemning the foreign policy of Mr. Gladstone. In estimating the full merit and success of the policy which has guided our foreign affairs for the last six years, it is necessary not merely to set out its positive achievements, but also to recollect and to compare with its honourable record of peace the disastrous history of the five years which preceded it. Speaking at West Calder on November 27, 1879, Mr. Gladstone said: 'Pericles, the great Athenian statesman, said, with regard to women, their greatest merit was to be never heard of. Now, what Pericles untruly said of women, I am very much disposed to say of foreign affairs: their greatest merit would be to be never heard of.' Apply this text to the different periods of 1880-1885 and of 1886-1892, and what an astonishing contrast is presented! The former period began with Mr. Gladstone's humiliating letter of apology to the Ambassador of Austria.

It gave to this country the following expenditure on little wars and expeditions :

				£
1880-1.	Transvaal	...	...	656,000
1881-2.	"	...	...	1,769,000
"	Zulu	...	...	135,000
1882-3.	Egyptian Expedition	...	...	3,895,000
"	Transvaal	...	...	14,000
1883-4.	Egypt	...	...	381,750
1884-5.	Nile Expedition	...	...	1,624,000
"	Soudan	...	...	964,000
"	Bechuanaland	...	...	725,000

It wound up with the quarrel with Russia and the Vote of Credit for £9,451,000. Speaking negatively, the second period has been the very antithesis of this. There have not been apologies ; there have not been wars ; there have not been controversies, strained to the very bursting point, with every foreign country. But, on the contrary, and positively, old-standing difficulties have been settled and cleared away. Questions which might have produced friction in the future have been amicably arranged. Friendship, and friendship with a powerful influence for the maintenance of European peace, has been maintained and strengthened with every Great Power.

The more formal and definite achievements of Lord Salisbury's policy have been these. In Europe, in 1887, a convention was entered into with Germany and other Powers, for the suppression of the slave trade. In 1889, at the instance of Great Britain, an international conference was held at Berlin on this subject. In 1890 a favourable commercial treaty was concluded with Greece.

Egypt.

In Egypt the progress made has been most remarkable. On November 9, 1885, Lord Salisbury said, at the Guildhall, that while our occupation of Egypt was temporary, 'the limit was not a limit of time, but of the work we have to do.' Since then Sir E. Baring and his band of able

British administrators have effected enormous reforms in every department of Government. The corvée, or forced labour, has been abolished. The use of the courbach, or whip, has been almost stopped. A native army of 13,000 men has been organized under British officers, and their efficiency shown in their repulse of the dervishes. 'It can be said that the slave trade in Egypt is extinct, and that slavery is moribund.' Administrative corruption has nearly disappeared. In finance, each year since 1887 has shown an increased surplus; in 1890 there was one of £599,000; in 1891, one of £1,000,000. This result has been achieved concurrently with repeated remissions of taxation, and a liberal expenditure on public works. Since 1886 £1,800,000 has been expended on remunerative irrigation works. It is estimated that if prices remained now as they were in 1881, the increase in the value of exports and imports would be nearly £7,000,000, the bulk of which trade is enjoyed by Great Britain. Improvements are continuously being effected in railways, the post-office, telegraphs, the police, and especially in the criminal courts and the administration of justice.

In 1887 a convention was made between Great Britain and France, and approved by the other Great Powers, by which the signatories agreed to guarantee the neutralization of the Suez Canal, its freedom as a waterway being at all times recognised.

Africa.

In Africa, by a series of amicable arrangements with European Powers, a gigantic partition of territory has been effected, and, thanks to the prescience of Lord Salisbury, vast tracts have been secured for the trade and civilization of our country, while possible causes of future conflict with European Powers have been equitably and quickly removed. The spheres of influence of Great Britain and Portugal were defined by the Anglo-Portuguese Agreement of 1891. I venture to give the following excellent summary of the effect of the other agreements from the 'Campaign Guide':

'The Anglo-German Agreement.'—In June, 1890, the signature of one of the most important documents ever drafted by states-

men signalized the greatest of Lord Salisbury's triumphs, and the completion of negotiations which comprehended the whole relations of the two countries in Africa. In securing the principal points of vantage in a continent, it is of importance to obtain the great waterways—whether by lake or navigable river—for the purposes of commerce. In the continent of Africa there are four great navigable highways—the Nile, the Niger, the Congo, and the Zambesi. Lord Salisbury has secured for this country possession of the main streams of three of these great highways, while the fourth—the Congo—has been declared neutral and free to the trade of the world, and he has planted our flag on the shores of every one of the great central lakes of Africa.

Central Lakes.—Among the Great Lake States Lord Salisbury has secured for us the empire of Uganda, lying along the coast of Lake Victoria, with an estimated population of about 5,000,000 and an extent of 70,000 square miles, and the sovereignty over Ruanda, which has a population not fewer than that of Uganda, and occupies a lofty, well-watered plateau, considered highly suited for European colonization. Besides these, we have obtained the district of Unyoro, which extends along the shores of the Albert Nyanza and Lake Albert Edward, an immense tract of fertile and well-watered country, having unlimited resources in its immense herds of cattle and in its minerals—the iron forgers of Unyoro and Uganda vying with each other for excellency in workmanship.

East Africa.—In securing for us the paramount sway at the Court of Zanzibar, Lord Salisbury has obtained the goodwill of the foreign trade of that State, which at present amounts to £2,000,000 per annum, and which (since the German Company was formed) had been gradually slipping from our hands into those of our rivals, without our being in a position to check the loss. Zanzibar has for many years been the great gateway for all commerce passing between East Africa, India, and Europe. In addition, we have secured a valuable coast-line of over 400 miles—for the most part under the Sultanate of Zanzibar—where are found some of the best harbours on the whole east coast of Africa. A short distance from the island of Pemba lies the great natural harbour of Mombasa, the chief port of the British East Africa Company, which has a magnificent land-locked bay, sufficient, it is said, to hold nearly the whole British navy, and where piers and jetties have already been erected, and beacons and lights set up for the assistance of mariners, such as cannot be found elsewhere on the whole coast. The Indian sappers and miners in the employ of the company have already built a splendid new town, and they are now proceeding with redoubled energy to complete the tramways around

the port and the great railway to the Victoria Nyanza,* a distance of 400 miles. Already materials for thirty miles of the railway have been laid down, while arrangements for placing steamers on the lakes are completed, and soon the vast resources of the interior will be within a couple of days' journey from the coast, and the trade with the teeming millions inhabiting the fertile regions around the Great Lakes will be in British hands. Meantime, subsidiary roadways are rapidly being formed, converging on the line of railway, and numerous trading-stations have been erected throughout the territory; while the natives have fully recognised their new governors. Sir Richard Temple has stated in Parliament that by the Anglo-German Treaty Lord Salisbury has added a million of square miles of territory to the Queen's dominions, being an addition of one-eighth to the Empire.

'West Africa.'—On the West coast we have secured to us the waterway of the great river of the North, the Niger, which is now under the highly successful administration of the Royal Niger Company. That company has a capital of £1,000,000 fully subscribed, and includes under its control the empires of Sokoto and Gando, which are the largest, the most populous, and most extensive empires in the Western Soudan, having a population of 10,000,000, and almost unlimited resources in their rich agricultural districts, and their valuable cotton, coffee, and cocoa plantations, as well as in the immense product of palm-oil. The trade of the company has increased at the rate of nearly £40,000 within the last two years. Although it is true that the Niger had been recognised by Germany as under our influence by arrangements made by Lord Salisbury previously, it is right to point out that he has now added the adjoining territories, which are administered by British companies (one of which, founded in Liverpool, has a capital of £2,000,000, and carries an immense trade in what are known as the Oil Rivers).

'Zambesia.'—This vast territory, which is rendered sacred to every Briton by the life and death of Livingstone within its borders, and which, having become valuable by reason of British wealth and energy, was claimed partly by Germany and partly by the Portuguese, has now been finally secured to us. This is the territory to which has been given the name of "Livingstone Land." In the northern section of this district, during the last fifteen years, Scottish traders, banding themselves together under the title of the "African Lakes Company," have built up

* This is the railway the steps necessary for the construction of which have been so bitterly obstructed in the House of Commons by Radical members.

a valuable trade around a score of settlements, both along the shores of Lake Nyassa and Tanganika, and in the Shiré Highlands. The territory extends to nearly 40,000 square miles, and it is being rapidly developed by means of steamships upon Lakes Nyassa and Tanganika, and by roadways such as the "Stevenson" Road, which have now become the highways of an ever-increasing and valuable trade between the Indian Ocean and the heart of Africa. Further south the territories of Mashonaland and Matabeleland have also been brought definitely under our flag, over 100,000 square miles in extent, and well known to be rich in gold reefs, which have already attracted a large volume of emigration from the more southerly States of the colony. Thanks to the efforts of our Prime Minister, the Zambesi waterway will soon be opened as an international highway to carry those valuable exports of gold and other wealth from Mashona and Matabele Lands to the ocean. The agreement secures for us "free trade" throughout the narrow strip of 120 miles of German territory north of Tanganika (which alone prevents our possessions on the North from joining hands with those of the South).

'The Anglo-French Agreement.'—A little later a similar agreement, only second in importance, was made with France. France recognised the British protectorate of Zanzibar, and Britain hers of Madagascar, and it was specially agreed that "the missionaries of both countries shall enjoy complete protection and religious toleration, and liberty for all forms of worship shall be guaranteed." A line was drawn from Say, on the Upper Niger, to Barruwa, on Lake Tchad, securing to British influence the whole of the kingdom of Sokoto. South of this all is British, north of it French. It gives to Britain access to Lake Tchad, the great lake of that part of Africa, complete possession of the waterway of the Niger, and the country, which is incomparably the most valuable.

'The Anglo-Italian Agreement.'—A similar agreement was also made with Italy in 1891 defining the limits of the British and Italian spheres in the north-east of the continent.

'This series of treaties is without precedent, and it may be questioned if any single statesman ever did so much to shape the destinies of millions of men as Lord Salisbury has done, without requiring a single vote of credit or sacrificing a single soldier's life. Certainly none has ever surpassed his diplomacy in opening up without loss of life or treasure vast fields for the commerce and enterprise of his fellow-countrymen. As the result of his policy in Africa and elsewhere, upwards of 2,000,000 square miles of territory have been brought under the British flag, and a population of nearly 20,000,000 has been brought under British influence, and within the reach of civilization.'

We may leave his work in Africa by recording the comment of Mr. Gladstone upon it : "As to the African portion of the question, I think it my duty to give unqualified credit to Lord Salisbury for the spirit in which he has set about this agreement. It is a good spirit, having regard to the best interests of England, and is also the spirit of one who did not wish to view those interests in a narrow or selfish manner, but who desired in the discharge of this great colonizing, protecting, or superintending function, that the benefits should extend ungrudgingly to all countries in the world."

III.

INDIA.

A JOINT COMMISSION has delimited the Afghan frontier. The limits of Russian advance between the Oxus and the Persian frontier have been definitely laid down. Friendly relations have been maintained with Afghanistan. Burmah has been pacified. In 1887 a treaty was made with China, to define the relations that should subsist between that country and Burmah. The territory of Suakim has been protected from Tibetan aggression. A British protectorate has been established over North Borneo and Sarawak, over an area of seventy square miles. To secure the north-west frontier of India, during the last five years £10,000,000 has been expended on strategic railways, and £5,000,000 on fortifications and military roads. In a very different department of affairs, by the India Councils Act of this year, larger powers are given to the several councils, and the possible application of the representative principle in them under safeguards is admitted.

IV.

THE COLONIES.

WHAT has been written with respect to our Foreign Policy may be repeated with regard to the conduct of colonial affairs during the last six years. It has been the opposite to that of the previous six years. In Africa and Australasia alike there had been confusion, uncertainty, and irritation. Mr. Labouchere, in *Truth* of March 26, 1891, wrote: 'What, I want to know, is England the better for her colonies?—Not a single brass farthing!' It is in precisely the reverse spirit to this that, since 1886, colonial sentiment has been consulted, and colonial interests, as far as possible, preserved. The first colonial conference was held in 1887.

On April 4 of that year delegates from all the self-governing colonies met at the Foreign Office, under the presidency of Sir H. Holland.

At the sitting of May 6, the Home Government undertook to provide five fast cruisers and two torpedo gunboats for the exclusive use of the Australasian colonies, while they agreed in return to pay £91,000 a year for their maintenance and 5 per cent. on the initial cost of the vessels. Arrangements were made for the transfer of English officers for service with the colonial forces.

The Colonial Probates Bill, 1892, may be referred to as a small but suggestive outcome of the desire expressed at the colonial conference. Several of the Australasian colonies had passed Acts providing that where competent Courts in this country had granted probate or letters of administration for deceased persons having property in the colonies, they

were to have the same effect as if granted there. That Bill proposed, by reciprocal legislation, to enact that the Queen, on being satisfied that the Legislature of any British possession had made adequate provision for the recognition of probates and letters of administration granted by the Courts of the United Kingdom, might direct that this Act should apply, so that probate and letters of administration granted to the colony for persons having property in this country shall be recognised here.

Australasia.

In the New Hebrides, in October, 1887, a convention was concluded with France, by which the withdrawal of French troops was amicably effected.

In New Guinea, in September, 1888, British sovereignty was formally proclaimed over 97,000 square miles of the island.

In Samoa, German interference had led to civil war. A conference was held in 1889 between Great Britain, Germany, and the United States, with the result that the independence of the islands, and the neutrality of the three Powers, was declared, and a pledge given of abstention from future interference with their affairs.

In 1890 legislation was passed giving constitutional government to Western Australia.

South Africa.

Zululand.—The troubles in this country have been overcome by a judicious arrangement with the Boers in December, 1886; and the proclamation of British sovereignty, at the desire of the Zulus themselves, over Eastern Zululand in February, 1887.

Swaziland.—The difficulties which arose from the same causes further north have also been dealt with by a convention with the Transvaal in 1890, by which the independence of the Swazis is guaranteed.

Amatongaland.—British protection has also been extended to this country, lying between Zululand and the Portuguese possessions in the East.

Bechuanaland, Matabele, and Mashona-land.—The erection of part of Bechuanaland into a Crown colony in 1885, and the extension of British influence over Matabele and Mashona-land, have been followed by the incorporation of the British South African Company.

Zanzibar.—Under British influence slavery has been abolished at Zanzibar in 1891, important concessions secured for the British East African Company, and Zanzibar declared a free port by the Sultan in 1891.

The Niger Districts.—A protectorate was formally proclaimed over these districts in October, 1887, including the country subject to the Royal Niger Company.

North America.

Canadian Fisheries.—The conflicting interests of Canadian and United States subjects in the fisheries on the east coast of America have always been a fruitful subject of difficulty. In 1888 these disputes were referred to a Commission, and a *modus vivendi* arrived at, the duration of which was subsequently prolonged.

Behring's Sea Seal Fishings.—A problem of equal difficulty existed on the west coast of America in the question as to the rights of fishing for seals in Behring's Sea. After a long correspondence an agreement was arrived at in 1891 providing for the reference of the differences to arbitration. Pending the arbitration, a *modus vivendi* for the year 1891 was agreed to on terms distinctly favourable to the United States. Delays occurred in the ratification by their Senate of the treaty, and in 1892 they demanded a continuance of the *modus vivendi*, which, if further prolonged on the same terms, would have prejudiced the rights of Canadian sealers. For a short time there was some tension, but the courtesy and judgment of Lord Salisbury has led to an agreement by which either nationality gives security for damages from its action pending the decision of the arbiters, should it be found to be wrong. The treaty has now been unconditionally ratified by the American Senate.

The Newfoundland Fisheries.—Similar complications existed in reference to the rights of France and of our colonists in Newfoundland in the fishings on what is known

as the French shore on that island. Certain rights had been recognised as belonging to French fishermen from the time of the Treaty of Utrecht, and the relations of the colonial and French fishermen were a constant subject of friction. An agreement was arrived at with the French Government providing for a temporary arrangement, and a future settlement by arbitration. On February 9, 1892, Lord Salisbury made this statement: 'If her Majesty's Government had been let alone we should have procured a settlement. Our efforts had the very fairest promise of success. But unfortunately a Bill was necessary. When it got into the other House the observations that were made by gentlemen who believed and announced themselves to be on the point of coming into office at an early day were such as to entirely destroy in the French Government any hope that they would obtain the execution of the decree of the arbitrators who might be appointed. The result is that since that speech was delivered we have not moved an inch.'

Imperial Defence Act.

By the Imperial Defence Act of 1888, which was carried at the resolutions of the colonial conference, provision was made, at the joint expense of the colonies and Great Britain, for the establishment of an Australian squadron of five cruisers and two torpedo-boats. Under this Act, too, it was provided that for an imperial defence throughout the world there should be expended on

Coaling-stations	-	-	-	£360,000
Barracks at those stations	-	-	-	350,000
Heavy guns	-	-	-	100,000
Colonial ports	-	-	-	441,000

V.

THE TREASURY.

IN 1887 Mr. Goschen in his first Budget (April 21) found himself in possession of an accrued surplus of £975,000. By an increase in the stamp duty on transfers of certain stock, and by a readjustment of the debt charges, he added £100,000, and £1,700,000 to this, and produced an available surplus of £2,779,000. With this he reduced the income-tax by 1d., from 8d. to 7d. in the £, and gave farmers the option of paying income-tax on their profits, instead of on their rents. This disposed of £1,560,000. He reduced the tobacco duty from 3s. 6d. to 3s. 2d. per lb., and thereby disposed of £600,000. Then he gave £280,000 in aid of local taxation in England and Scotland, and £50,000 in aid of arterial drainage, and of certain industries in Ireland. So that £2,490,000 was expended in relief, and £289,000 carried forward.

Budget of 1888.

In 1888 the chief drain upon an accrued surplus of £2,165,000 was found in the new scheme of Local Government finance, introduced contemporaneously with the Local Government Bill for England and Wales. Under this scheme the local authorities surrendered £2,600,000, which was the total amount of various grants in aid, which they had previously received from the Imperial Exchequer, and which were scattered through the Civil Service Estimates. On the other hand, they would in future receive £3,000,000 from the transfer into their hands of existing licences,

£800,000 from new licences, and £1,704,000 from the transfer to them of half the probate duty. They would thus receive a total sum of £5,504,000, and therefore have under the new scheme a net gain of £2,900,000. In this his second Budget (introduced on March 26), Mr. Goschen increased certain stamp duties, and imposed a tax on bottled wines of 5s. per dozen, which was intended to affect the finer class of sparkling wines only. With the proceeds of these new taxes, and with his actual surplus, he was able to give the large new relief to total ratepayers, which has just been stated, and also to take off another 1d. from the income-tax, and so further to reduce it from 7d. to 6d. in the £.

In 1888 the conversion of the National Debt was successfully accomplished. The interest on 'New Threes,' 'Reduced,' and 'Consols' was reduced to $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. for fifteen years, and then to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. £1,400,000 a year was thereby saved to the country from April, 1889, and £2,800,000 a year from April, 1903.

Budget of 1889.

In 1889 the Budget was introduced on April 15. While there was an accrued surplus of £2,800,000, the increased expenditure in the Army and Navy Estimates, and that proposed for imperial defence, more than swallowed this sum up; and to meet these national requirements an increased tax of 1 per cent. was imposed upon the succession to all estates which amounted to £10,000 or more, whether of realty or personality; and an increased duty of $\frac{1}{14}$ th of 1d. was put on the gallon of beer. The increase in the succession duty was calculated to produce £800,000; the increase on the beer duty to produce £350,000. It will be convenient to state the details of the naval and military expenditure under their respective headings.

Budget of 1890.

In 1890 there was an accrued surplus of £3,549,000, and by his fourth Budget (April 17) Mr. Goschen was able to reduce the tea duty by 2d. per lb., viz., from 6d. to 4d. per lb., which represented a diminution of taxation of the sum

of £1,500,000; to reduce the duty on currants from 7s. to 2s. per cwt., which represented a loss of revenue of about £210,000: and in the case of houses assessed at from £20 to £40 a year, to reduce the inhabited house duty to 2d. and 4d.; and, in the case of houses assessed at between £40 and £60, to reduce it to 4d. and 6d. This reduction in the inhabited house duty represented £550,000, and it was calculated that 800,000 persons received relief from it. Further, the sum of £300,000 was appropriated to improved barrack accommodation, £100,000 to a more complete equipment of the volunteers, and £80,000 in the reduction to 2½d. of the ocean postage between this country and India and the colonies. In addition, the stamp duty payable on health policies was placed on the same basis as that on life policies, and the stamps on agreements of apprenticeship, which had been 5s. for every £5 of premium, was reduced to the uniform sum of 2s. 6d.

Then, by the transfer of the duty on the barrel of beer from the imperial to the local exchequers, and by the imposition of an additional duty of 6d. per gallon on spirits, a fund of £1,300,000 was raised, to be used by the local authorities for the following objects: £150,000 was allocated to the Metropolitan Police Superannuation Fund, £150,000 to the superannuation funds of the County Police, £393,000 to the County Councils. A remaining sum of £350,000, which had originally been intended to be given to the local authorities for the purchase of the licences of public-houses, was handed over to them to be applied primarily for the advancement of technical education.

Budget of 1891.

In 1891 the Budget speech was made on April 23. There was an accrued surplus of £1,756,000. But it was necessary to meet some unexpected and supplementary items of expenditure. £200,000 was required for the relief works in Ireland, and £200,000 for the Post Office, of which £150,000 was absorbed in increases of wages amongst several branches of its servants. Moreover, as the requirements of the local authorities, and of the Army and Navy, had in previous years diverted from reductions of taxation the available surpluses, so now the determination

of the Government to give assisted education to the country precluded any remissions of taxation. The sum of £960,000 was set aside for assisted education, £500,000 for further barrack construction, and £400,000 for the withdrawal from circulation of light gold coin.

Budget of 1892.

In 1892, in his sixth Budget, introduced on April 11, Mr. Goschen, after allowing £2,500,000 for assisted education, had a margin of £224,000, to deal with. By a re-arrangement of the duties on sparkling wines, £200,000 might be required. The remaining £24,000 was used for the reduction of the fees charged on the renewal of patents, 'in the interests of the poorer patentees, and with the view of giving the fullest scope to the development of inventions.'

It is important to note the magnitude of the contributions now given to the local authorities. They amount for this financial year in all to £7,638,000; *i.e.*, from probate duty, £2,808,000; from the beer and spirit duties, £1,400,000; from licences, £3,390,000; a special contribution to Ireland, £40,000.

Summary.

Let us sum up the results of these six years of Unionist finance. By definite remissions of taxation, every class has been benefited. The reduction of 2d. on the income-tax has brought relief to the wealthier and to the middle class; the reductions on the tea, tobacco, and currant duties have been felt by all consumers, but must necessarily be of most value in the case of the poorest consumers. The alteration in the inhabited house duty was intended to help particularly the poorer middle-class and the highest grades of artisans. But it is not merely by reductions in taxation, it is also by an increase of expenditure in many directions, that the community has derived benefit from these six years of finance. And no one who has thought of the limited subject-matter on which our taxation now falls, or of the difficulty of discovering new subjects on which it shall fall, will question the wisdom of not unnecessarily still further contracting the margins of its incidence.

The increase of expenditure has been principally on three main objects :

- (1) On the improvement of the national defences, and of the efficiency of the Army and the Navy.
- (2) On education.
- (3) On relief of local taxation.

These large positive reductions in taxation, and these incontestably beneficial increases in expenditure, have involved new or higher taxation merely on—

- (1) Death and succession duty on estates of
- (2) Transfer of securities, and issue of limited companies producing £120,000 a year.
- (3) Sparkling wines and spirits.

It may be confidently asserted, therefore, that no wage-earning man has had in these six years one farthing taken from him by new taxation, or by an increase in the price of commodities, to set against what he has gained by the reductions in taxation and by the increases in expenditure.

The National Debt.

What has actually been done towards the reduction of the National Debt since 1886, as compared with what was effected in the six preceding years, is this : 'From 1881-82 to 1885-86 the reduction of liabilities was £28,400,000, while in the six years from 1886-87 to 1891-92 the reduction is £38,823,000, showing a difference of £10,423,000 to the advantage of the present Government' (Mr. Goschen in the House of Commons, May 16, 1892).

In this context this fact may be noted : Lord Beaconsfield in 1875 bought 176,000 shares in the Suez Canal for £4,076,000. They have paid £200,000 in interest up to date. In 1894 their capital value will be £19,000,000, bearing interest, at the present rate, of £625,000 a year. It will then be possible to apply £15,000,000, the enhanced capital value of this investment, which Mr. Gladstone called in a speech made at Glasgow on December 5, 1879, 'a financial operation of a ridiculous description,' to the reduction of the National Debt.

VI.

THE WAR OFFICE.

ALTHOUGH the administration of the War Office has not received such unqualified approval as Lord George Hamilton's at the Admiralty, and although it must be admitted that much remains to be done before our Army is placed in a really satisfactory state, Mr. Stanhope has been a vigorous and reforming administrator, and has been able to materially improve the efficiency of every branch of that service. The following table shows the average effective strength of the Army during the several years of Mr. Gladstone's last and Lord Salisbury's present Government :

Mr. Gladstone.	Lord Salisbury.
1880.....191,804.	1887.....208,357.
1881.....188,958.	1888.....211,021.
1882.....189,133.	1889.....211,030.
1883.....193,397.	1890.....210,213.
1884.....184,227.	1891.....210,499.
1885.....188,657.	

Mr. Stanhope, speaking in the House of Commons on March 7, 1892, said : ' Since 1886 the Reserve has increased by 24,000. Our military strength of regulars and reserves available for service at home and abroad, as compared with what it was ten years ago, shows an increase of no less than 66,000 men.'

By the National Defence Act, 1888, powers of user have been obtained over railway lines in the event of invasion,

and for the acquisition of carriages, animals, or vessels at such a time. It is impossible here to set out in detail the particular military reforms which have been carried out by this Government. But it must be remembered that by the Barrack Act, £4,100,000 is to be expended on improved barrack accommodation, and that amongst the most important of their reforms are those which are intended to give greater comfort and health to the life of the private soldier. The following extract from the report of the Inspector-General of Recruiting, dated February 18, 1892, shows that these changes have not been unproductive of good :

‘It has been stated that the Army is recruited from “the dregs of the population” and the “riff-raff” of the towns. These statements are not borne out by facts. Were they true, it would be impossible that the returns of each year should show, as they do, a steady decrease in crime of all sorts, and an almost entire absence of those crimes which are most rife amongst the “dregs” and “riff-raff” from which the soldiers are said to be recruited. Such crimes as theft and violent assaults are now almost unknown in the Army ; whilst drunkenness is very much less frequent than it was even five years ago. During 1890 the number of courts-martial was 10,673 ; the number of minor punishments inflicted, 212,150 ; number of men fined for drunkenness, 17,000 ; number of men in possession of good-conduct badge, 90,160. For 1885 the figures were : Courts-martial, 14,280 ; minor punishments, 284,008 ; drunkenness, 23,324 ; good-conduct badges, 72,345. This diminution in crime is attributable to a great extent (1) *To the great increase in the comfort and the healthy amusements to the soldier within the precincts of his barracks*, and the endeavour to make it his home ; (2) *To the improvement, especially in the last three years, in the quality and variety of the food provided for the soldier*, who is therefore less tempted to indulge in intoxicating liquors whilst in search of food outside his barracks ; (3) to the influence of education, which has enabled many more soldiers than heretofore to derive amusement from the books and newspapers at their disposal in the regimental or garrison libraries and recreation rooms.’

Many encouragements have been given to the Volunteers, the most material of them being the increase in the capitulation grant from 30s. to 35s., and the additional allowance of 12s. for the acquisition of great-coats.

VII.

THE ADMIRALTY.

CLOSELY connected with the last topic is the subject of the Navy. And the policy and programme of the Government with respect to the Navy centres in the Naval Defence Act, which came on for second reading in the House of Commons on May 6, 1889. Substantially this carried out the terms of the resolution which Lord George Hamilton had moved on March 7, that 'It is expedient that a sum not exceeding £21,500,000 be granted for the purpose of building, arming and equipping, and completing for sea, vessels for her Majesty's Navy, and that it is expedient that a sum not exceeding £10,000,000 be issued out of the Consolidated Fund in seven years ending March 31, 1896; and that a sum not exceeding £11,500,000 be issued out of the moneys to be provided by Parliament for the naval service for the five financial years ending March 31, 1894.'

The essence of this proposal, and of the Bill, was that one comprehensive view shall be taken of the requirements of the Navy, and that those requirements shall be met by one complete and coherent scheme, and not left to the chances of political events, and the capricious impulses of popular or party sentiment. The Navy, like the Army, had suffered much in the past from such vicissitudes. At one time it had been stinted; at another, in some moment of national panic, vast sums had been spent extravagantly, short-sightedly, in the vain attempt suddenly to repair the effects of previous parsimony. Now it was resolved that the country shall be bound by expenditure spread over several

years to complete a carefully considered programme of naval construction. How in the following years this prudent resolve has actually been carried out will be best explained by the speeches of Mr. Forwood, and the statement issued in 1892 by Lord George Hamilton.

'At Blackpool on January 23, 1890, Mr. Forwood, M.P. (Secretary to the Admiralty), said he would give a short sketch of what had been done by the Admiralty in three and a half years since they took charge of the naval administration. Between 1880 and 1885 the Navy was allowed to run down, and honour and glory were earned by Chancellors of the Exchequer for economy of the worst description. In 1885 the Press called the attention of the nation to this neglect, and at the close of that year a spasmodic effort was made to strengthen the fleet, so that, whilst during the five years ending 1885 only £9,000,000 had been expended on new ships, the sum so expended in the five years ending March, 1890, would have been £15,500,000, and by March, 1894, £16,100,000 would have been provided for the same purpose. Those figures were, however, very far from conveying the great increase that had taken place and was being made in the effective fighting strength of the Navy. In years gone by numbers of ships in a partly finished state accumulated in our dockyards, money being devoted more to laying down new vessels than finishing those in hand. When, in 1886, the present Board came into office the amount of capital expended in incomplete ships, and therefore lying dormant so far as effective worth was concerned, was £8,500,000. This sum they had reduced in 1889 to £4,400,000, and in March next it would only amount to a little over one and a half millions, excluding ships laid down under the Defence Act of last Session. (Cheers.) The ships completed between 1886 and 1891 would include 21 ironclads, 21 protected cruisers, and 56 smaller vessels. To this powerful fleet they would by 1894 add further 8 first-class battleships, 2 second-class battleships, 9 protected cruisers, first-class; 33 protected cruisers, second-class, and 18 other war vessels, 70 in all, or a total of 161 vessels. By the wise provisions of the Naval Defence Act that programme must be carried, and was beyond the reach of any change of policy resulting from a change of Government. Ten of our older ironclads were being modernized in either engines or armaments, or both, and so being made useful fighting vessels. Another advance in our defensive strength was the substitution of old but useful fighting steamships for the obsolete hulks which acted as guardships at the dockyards, Portsmouth. The armour-clads completed between 1875 and 1885 averaged in displacement 7,390 tons and 5,650 of indicated horse-power each, the largest being 10,800

tons and 8,000 indicated horse-power, against an average of 9,800 tons and 10,780 horse-power of vessels completed or to be completed between 1885 and 1894, the largest being over 14,000 tons with 12,000 indicated horse-power. The increase in the size of protected cruisers was more conspicuous, for whilst their tonnage averaged 2,000 tons each in the first period and 2,006 horse-power, in the present decade they would average 3,894 tons and 8,300 indicated horse-power. Moreover, no loss of time would in future attend the supply of coal. Instead of our spare vessels being left unused in our dockyards from one year's end to another, and our officers kept on half-pay, every available ship had been commissioned for a short cruise during the naval manœuvres. A satisfactory feature was that the coal bill of the Navy had increased from 248,000 tons in 1886 to 358,000 tons in 1889, thus showing the increased mobility of our fleet. They had added to their available supply of reserve men and officers from the mercantile navy, and they had secured the call of a number of the largest and fastest merchant vessels for armed cruisers. With the increase in the fleet they had had to extend the numbers of their men from 61,000 to 65,000. As to the all-important question of guns for our ships, a great advance had been made in the productive power of the country within the last three years by the encouragement given to private makers, and by the improvements and extensions at Woolwich ; so that, although there was at present an abnormally large demand both for land and sea service, yet he fully believed that the guns for our new ships would be ready quite as soon as the vessels were ready to receive them. The retention of Woolwich as a gun-making establishment was most valuable as a check upon prices charged by private makers. The public had been recently informed by the Press that the *Victoria* was to proceed to sea without trying the strengthened 100-ton gun which had been returned to her from Elswick. It was also stated that it would be dangerous to fire the *Benbow*'s guns with full charges. As those remarks had been widely circulated, he took that opportunity of giving them a distinct contradiction. (Cheers.) In view of the successful trials of the Italian 100-ton guns, it was decided to adopt that type for a few of our ships. One of those had been successfully tried. He described the progress that had been made since 1886 in the provision of reserves of guns and munitions of war, and said that the store of munition had increased even at a greater ratio than the guns. (Cheers.) While they had thus been expending larger sums, they had been by improved administration obtaining a better value for the outlay, and he felt sure the country would not grudge the money if satisfied on this head. (Cheers.) In conclusion he said that although much had been done to improve their organization, yet

much more remained to be done. The extra efforts they had to make had arisen from a starvation of the Navy in the past.'

'Speaking on January 12, 1892, at a dinner of the Royal Naval Reserve, at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, Mr. A. B. Forwood, M.P., Secretary to the Admiralty, said he would devote his remarks to the nation's naval reserves, as most fitting for the occasion. The strength of a nation lay in its reserve of power, and the value of that force depended largely upon its mobility. To give some idea of the position and progress of the country in relation to its naval reserve, he must adopt some comparisons, and if he compared the present time with six years ago, he assured them that it was for no political or party purpose. The great anxiety of the First Lord of the Admiralty and his Board had been, concurrently with an increase of ships, to strengthen our position as regarded preparedness for emergencies. Before referring to the *personnel* of the fleet, which they so worthily represented, he would say a word as to

THE RESERVE OF SHIPS

and their equipment. In addition to the new vessels, of which they had heard much, and the ordinary fleet maintenance, they had renovated, or had in hand, most of the old armoured vessels. Formerly the stationary, or depot hulks, at the naval ports were obsolete hulks, which served merely the purpose of naval barracks. These non-seagoing vessels had been replaced at Sheerness, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Queenstown, and Pembroke, by such fighting vessels as the *Northampton*, *Nelson*, *Swiftsure*, and *Triumph*, which formed a considerable accession to the reserves ready for immediate service. An equally satisfactory change had recently been made with regard to the ships in reserve at the dockyards. These were now all placed conveniently together in the basins at the dockyards, ready coaled, with armament on board, stores set apart, and skeleton crews told off to keep them in order. A similar policy of preparedness had been pursued with reference to obtaining on the shortest notice the very large extra quantity of

COALS AND SEA STORES

that on the outbreak of war would be required. He thought that this was a better system than holding very heavy stocks of stores of a perishing character. A review of the reserve-ship question would not be complete without mentioning the new force of mercantile armed cruisers—a force the value of which it would be difficult to over-estimate. For the practical initiation of that scheme the credit was due to their good friend, Mr.

Ismay. They now retained on payment thirteen merchant steamers of an aggregate gross tonnage of 100,000 tons and 150,000 indicated horse-power. Such a tonnage built for the Navy would cost over £6,000,000 ; and, as they only paid £60,000 per annum to secure the call for their services, it was a good financial transaction for the country. This payment gave them also the call, free of charge, of fifteen other large and fine steamers. He might also mention that seventeen of these steamers were commanded by officers of the Naval Reserve. Moreover, the mercantile armed auxiliaries were excellent vedettes, or watchdogs of a fleet, and to those who said that they would be better employed as food-carriers, he replied that very high speed and large cargo capacity was not a practicable combination. The

PERSONNEL OF THE NAVY

had been recently considered by a thoroughly practical committee, presided over by Sir George Tryon, and on which Mr. Ismay sat as a representative shipowner. This committee spoke highly of the *morale* and good character of the force known as the Royal Naval Reserve, which must be gratifying to his audience. At one time there was a reluctance on the part of naval officers to associate the Navy too closely with the mercantile marine. That feeling was wearing away, and had almost disappeared, due largely, he believed, to the better stamp of men as regarded education and *status* who now entered the merchant service, and he hoped to see the bonds of union drawn still closer together. To estimate aright the importance of the Royal Naval Reserve to the Navy, he urged that its bearing as regarded the

NUMBERS

borne in the regular service must be considered. In 1886 the number of all ranks in the Navy was 61,500 ; to day the figures were 71,000, and would probably very shortly reach 74,000. Of the 71,000, 47,000, including 13,000 marines, were available for service afloat. The total of the Royal Naval Reserve in 1886 was 17,700 ; to-day its authorized number was 20,700. But as a matter of fact recruiting is, was, and had been so rapid that the total enrolled exceeded that number, and it represented approximately 40 per cent. of the continuous service available seagoing seamen class. The importance to the country of the Naval Reserve could not be exaggerated, and its value must increase. Although the number of warships would and must grow larger, the number of the regular force would not reasonably grow in an equal ratio. There was another advantage in

the reserve. The 10,000 second-class, or fishermen, were always at hand, and of the 10,000 men of the first-class, or seamen, no less than 7,000 were immediately available, they being engaged on short and home voyages, only 175 having leave for long voyages. Estimates had been made of the further possible increase of the service, and without undue pressure it was thought that 10,000 men in the two classes could be obtained, which would raise the total strength to 30,000 men out of the 80,000 British seamen and 70,000 fishermen which formed their source of supply. In fifteen years the merchant tonnage had gone up one and three-quarter millions, but the number of British seamen had diminished by 20,000, whereas the foreigners in our ships had increased by 6,000. With regard to firemen and stokers, the number of them in the reserve did not increase, and although no drill was required, an annual bounty was paid. The mercantile firemen as a class were not very orderly or amenable to discipline, and probably it would be found advisable to alter the present arrangement by enrolling and drilling those who joined the reserve similarly to the seamen class. In his opinion there need be no anxiety as to finding men to stoke, as there were so many employments in the country where a knowledge of firing was acquired. Satisfactory, however, as was the extension of the reserve of men, that of officers showed a still greater improvement. The numbers on the active list had increased from 220 in 1886 to 758 in 1891, and of these 86 had served, or were serving, their twelve months as officers in men-of-war, 39 being then afloat. To-day the number was still larger.—*Times*, January 13.

‘On March 8, 1892, the First Lord of the Admiralty issued a statement explanatory of the Naval Estimates, from which the following figures are taken :

Ordnance :	1886.	1892.
B.L. guns (afloat and in reserve) ...	499	1,868
Light quick-firing guns (afloat and in reserve) ...	33	1,715
Torpedoes (afloat and in reserve) ...	820	2,874

Ships (fighting) :

In commission—

At home—excluding coast defence ships, gun-boats, and torpedo-boats	...	15	21
Displacement tonnage	...	110,000	154,500
Abroad—total of all classes	...	96	110
Displacement tonnage	...	205,800	300,007
Complements—abroad	...	18,100	23,350

In reserve (ready for commission)—	1886.	1892.
Excluding coast defence ships, gun-boats, and torpedo-boats—		
Fleet reserve—		
Division A	—	6
Division B	—	11
Old First-class Steam Reserve ...	10	2
Displacement tonnage	25,700	82,200
 Ships of 15 knots speed and upwards (afloat and building), all classes except torpedo-boats	57	140
 Personnel :		
Establishments of officers and men (Active List)	61,400	74,100
Numbers of Royal Naval Reserve (officers and men)	18,300	23,500

VIII.

HOME OFFICE.

THE most important Acts that have proceeded from the Home Office are the following :

In 1887 the Coal-mines Regulation Act was passed, which consolidated the pre-existing mining law, and in addition contained many new provisions. It prohibited the employment of any boy under twelve ; empowered miners to appoint a check-weigher to take a correct account of the weight of the minerals on their behalf ; required that there should be two shafts, with proper communications for every seam that is being worked ; enjoined additional securities for ventilation ; regulated most carefully the conditions under which blasting shall be carried on ; enlarged the necessity for certificates for managers and sub-managers, and the powers of inspectors, and placed masters on the same footing as the men in respect of prosecutions. Mr. Burt, M.P., at Edinburgh, on October 11, 1887, said that this was 'the greatest measure of the kind that had ever yet been passed by the British Parliament,' and 'believed it would do much to protect life and limb, mitigate suffering,

and lessen the still enormous and terrible loss of life that occurred in connection with the mining industry.' These hopes have been realized, for in the report of mining accidents for 1891, it appears that the number of deaths from mining explosions in that year was smaller than in any year since 1851, when a record was first published of them. From explosions of gas the deaths in 1889 were 138; in 1890, 290; in 1891, 43.

In 1890 was passed the Police Superannuation Act. For the first time it gave to all constables a statutory right to pension, without medical certificate, who retired after certain specified years of service. There had grown up much discontent amongst the Metropolitan Police at the delay which had occurred to the satisfaction of their hopes; but by the liberal grant of two-thirds of their pay, as a pension to those who have completed twenty-five years' service, their grievance has been removed. This change involved no additional charge upon the rates, as it was met by funds supplied out of the Imperial Budget of that year. £150,000 went to the Metropolitan Police, £150,000 to the County Police.

In 1891 was passed the Factories and Workshops Act. It deals:

- (1) With the evils of the sweating system by new and stringent sanitary regulations applicable to all workshops, including domestic workshops and those of grown-up workers.
- (2) Provides by 'special rules' against mischiefs arising in factories from
 - Dangerous machinery.
 - Dangerous or unhealthy premises.
 - Defective ventilation.
 - Defective means of escape from fire, in case of all buildings existing or future.
- (3) Makes certain and enforceable the present uncertain and unenforceable limits of the hours of work for women.
- (4) Imposes minimum penalties for breaches of the Act in all cases of second offences where the offence is profitable.

- (5) Requires all future factory buildings to have at least a double means of escape from fire.
- (6) Prohibits employment of women within four weeks after child-birth.
- (7) Enlarges the inspectors' powers of entry.
- (8) Enlarges the time for starting prosecutions.
- (9) Requires lists of outworkers to be kept.
- (10) Enables Home Secretary to enforce sanitary provisions in case of default of local authority.

In administration, the Home Office has been anxious to make the system of mining and factory inspectorships satisfactory to the great body of working-men. Before Mr. Matthews' tenure of office, officers of the Army and Navy were able to deduct the years of their service when stating their age as candidates for factory inspectorships. This privilege has been removed by him ; and while the general limit of age for candidates for these posts is thirty, it has, in the case of working-men, been raised from thirty-five to thirty-eight. The system of examination works out so fairly as between the two classes of candidates—those who stand as working-men, and those who do not—that representatives of the two classes frequently come out together in one examination. Practically, the appointments of both factory and mining inspectorships only go now to men with actual practical or technical knowledge of factories or of mines. Leading local Trade-Unionists have been appointed in very many instances. As Mr. Matthews was at one time singled out for the partisan attacks of the Radical Press, perhaps it is not improper for me, who have had opportunities of watching his discharge of the singularly difficult and painful duties of a Judge of Criminal Appeal, to bear my testimony to the admirable patience, courage, and judgment which he has brought to bear upon every one of the cases with which he has had to deal.

IX.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD.

THE great work of this office has been the Local Government Act for England and Wales. To properly appreciate the full scope of the original conception of this measure, it is useful to refer to the masterly speech in which Mr. Ritchie introduced it to the House of Commons on March 19, 1888. From the Bill, as it was introduced, the Licensing Clauses, and the clauses creating District Councils, were dropped. The obvious responsibility for the loss of the Licensing Clauses must rest with those who raised a violent agitation against them. The real responsibility for the loss of the District Council Clauses attaches to those members of the Opposition who consumed so much time in Committee in moving amendments that the Government could not accept without overloading the Bill, and the new County Councils. This favourite Radical device of seeking to expand the scope of a Bill by impracticable additions was very freely indulged in. It achieves two ends. It enables the Radicals, who supported the alteration, to boast of the popular principle they endeavoured to engraft upon the Bill, and at the same time to stigmatize the Conservatives (who were forced for the sake of the Bill to oppose it) as opponents of the principle involved. But though the Local Government Bill was, in consequence of these Radical movements, shorn of some portions of its original dimensions, it remained emphatically a large measure of constructive statesmanship. To have extended in one Session all the vital provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act to the counties of England and

Wales, and to the Metropolis, was a great achievement. Radical speakers have been fond of saying that perhaps Conservative Governments could pass useful little measures, but that they were incapable of producing really large ones. This taunt has become obsolete. The passage of this Bill alone destroyed its truth. There are two other considerations to which attention should be paid. The Act has been conspicuously successful in practice. It has worked with singular ease, and in all its multifarious details has met the practical requirements of county government with remarkable precision. Even in London, in which case the experiment was the boldest, and in which the clauses creating the new municipality were hurried through the House of Commons with but scanty discussion, it is remarkable that so little practical difficulty has been found in moving the gigantic new machinery. The second consideration is this: Radicals have been prone to describe this measure as a skeleton which required to be covered with flesh, which they were burning to supply, but which Conservatives rejected. But it is remarkable what large additional duties have already been imposed upon the County Councils by subsequent legislation. The Technical Instruction Act, and its successor the Customs and Excise Act of 1890, have given to them most interesting educational duties. The Small Holdings Bill will give them an opportunity of making an experiment of the highest import to the future social and economical condition of Great Britain. In fact, it is clear that the councils will gradually absorb larger and larger duties, and that the District Councils of the future, especially in London, will be required to take over some portions of their administrative work. It is plain that, apart from party predilections, there is a general desire to enlarge the sphere of municipal activity, and to entrust to local authorities ever larger powers of controlling the health, the education, and the comfort of the community. It is equally clear that these heavier duties must involve increased municipal expenditure. But if the whole of that expenditure were to continue to be borne by one section only of the community, viz., the owners and occupiers of houses and lands, its burden would become intolerable, an economical reaction would set in, and the limits of municipal activity would

necessarily be curtailed. In this context, therefore, it is right to dwell again on the relief which the finance of Mr. Goschen has been able, out of imperial funds, to afford to the local rates. This financial policy is inseparably connected with that development of municipal and county life which springs from this great Local Government Act, and it may fairly be stated that without the assistance of the former the latter would be impossible.

To the credit of the Local Government Board must also be assigned the passage of two other considerable Acts—the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, and Public Health London Act, 1891. The Housing of the Working Classes Act (53 and 54 Vict., c. 70)

‘consolidates, in one lucid and comprehensive statute, both the group of enactments known as Cross’s Acts, 1875, relating to the clearing at public expense of large insanitary *areas* in great towns, and another group known as Torrens’ Acts, 1868-1885, relating to compelling the improvement, proper maintenance, or demolition of single insanitary lodging-houses at the expense of the owner, and the Labouring Classes Acts, 1851-1885, commonly known as Shaftesbury’s Acts. It also contains the following new provisions :

‘By section 21, in case of action under Cross’s Acts, compensation to expropriated owners, formerly subject to deduction in respect of rental enhanced by overcrowding or in respect of the cost necessary to abate nuisance arising *from overcrowding*, is now to be subject *also* to deduction in respect of rental enhanced by reason that a house is “used for illegal purposes”—*e.g.*, prostitution—and in respect of the cost necessary to abate nuisance *of any kind* arising from the condition of the house, and in respect of defective sanitation or repair of the house ; and, moreover,

‘By section 21 (2 c.), where it is proved that “premises are unfit for human habitation,” the owner’s compensation shall be limited to “the value of the land and of the materials of the buildings thereon.”

‘By sections 33 and 34, in case of proceedings under the Torrens group of Acts, where an owner of a dwelling found unfit for habitation fails to execute the required improvements, the local authority *must* order or carry out at the owner’s expense the demolition of the buildings. Previously to this they can take summary proceedings to have the dwelling “closed,” and can (at the owner’s expense) make an allowance to the tenants on account of their expenses in removing.

‘By section 92 the power of proceeding under Torrens’ Act is for the first time given to *rural* sanitary authorities.

‘In London, under an Act of 1879, the failure of a vestry or district board to proceed under Torrens’ Acts could be represented to the Metropolitan Board of Works—now the London County Council—who might supersede the discretion of the vestry or district board, and act for them at their expense. By section 45 of the new Act, the discretion of the rural sanitary authorities may be similarly superseded by their County Councils.

‘By section 39, an additional kind of scheme, of a parochial rather than metropolitan kind, is devised, whereby the lesser “local authorities,” which include vestries and district boards in London and rural sanitary authorities elsewhere, may at their expense acquire and clear the sites of demolished buildings, as well as adjoining land, (a) where they resolve that it would benefit the health of the inhabitants of houses neighbouring to any house ordered to be demolished, “if the area of the dwelling-house of which such building forms part were used for all or any of the following purposes, that is to say, either (i.) dedicated as a highway or open space, or (ii.) appropriated, sold, or let for the erection of dwellings for the working-classes, or (iii.) exchanged with other neighbouring land which is more suitable for the erection of such dwellings, and on exchange will be appropriated, sold, or let for such erection;” or (b) where it appears that “the closeness, narrowness, and bad arrangement or bad condition of any buildings or the want of light, air, ventilation, or proper conveniences, or any other sanitary defects in any building is dangerous or prejudicial to the health of the inhabitants either of the said buildings or of the neighbouring buildings, and that the demolition or the reconstruction and rearrangement of the said buildings or of some of them, is necessary to remedy the said evils, and that the area comprising those buildings,” etc., is too small to be dealt with as an unhealthy area under Cross’s Acts. By section 46 such schemes may in London be contributed to by the County Council, or by them undertaken over the heads of the Vestry or District Board at metropolitan expense.

‘By section 41 the new principles of restricted compensation, similar to those of section 21 above described, are applied to all taking of land by the lesser local authorities to remove “obstructive” buildings, or in execution of parochial schemes under section 39.

‘By section 38 four householders, as well as a medical officer, may set the local authority in motion to remove obstructive buildings. And the owner of land taken for such a purpose can no longer insist on his entire holding being taken.

'By section 88 the penalty is increased from £20 to £50 for members of a local authority voting on questions relating to property in which they are personally interested, and is now, for the first time, enacted against members of London vestries and district boards, and against provincial county councillors and sanitary authorities, besides affecting, as heretofore, London county councillors and town councillors in boroughs.'

The Public Health London Act (54 and 55 Vict., c. 76) consolidated and amended the sanitary laws regulating London. This had been done for the rest of the country in 1875. But in London they were up to *last* year scattered over twenty-nine separate statutes, commencing with Michael Angelo Taylor's Act of 1817. I doubt whether sufficient importance has been attached to this, and the kindred measure, consolidating the Housing of the Working Classes Acts. As Mr. Ritchie has frequently pointed out, the old reason why insanitary dwellings had not been dealt with, or dangers to public health not met, by the local authorities, has been not because the law is inadequate or defective, and not even because the local authority is supine, but because the law has been so confused and buried that it was not properly appreciated. In future this difficulty in the way of local administrators has been removed. The law lies clearly set out before them in these two consolidating statutes, which have, in addition, carefully and stringently strengthened the law on these two difficult matters.

X.

BOARD OF TRADE.

PROBABLY few Acts passed during the Parliament have been more popular in their object and operation than the Merchandise Marks Act, 1887, which sought to stop at the port of British importation goods manufactured abroad which bore false British trade-marks. That such an Act was really required was quickly shown. The Commissioners of Customs reported that in the year ending on March 31, 1889, the number of stoppages of such goods amounted to 7,876, and included 217,458 separate packages. Germany supplied the greatest number of falsely-marked goods, France, Holland and Belgium coming next. Of the total number of detections, nearly a half were made at the port of London.

In a speech delivered at Clifton on November 14, 1890, Sir M. Hicks-Beach thus summed up the work of his department up till then :

' He should like to say something of the measures for which he had been responsible during the past three years. First of all, with regard to the mercantile marine, they had passed an Act for compelling all ships that went to sea to carry sufficient life-saving appliances for their passengers and crew in cases of ordinary accident. He passed another Act for putting on a fairer basis the charges made for ships who used their docks—a very technical and difficult subject, and one in which British people, as ratepayers and owners of the docks, were not a little interested. And lastly, he passed an Act giving to pilots, with whom they all sympathized, representation on pilotage boards, and amending the law in certain other respects for the benefit of that profession. Then, with regard to railways, he passed an Act in 1888, a very important measure, enabling the Railway Commissioners to deal with many matters of the greatest importance to all who wished to send or receive produce or goods by rail, and especially to prohibit any undue preference to

foreign goods as against English. That Act also empowered the Board of Trade to undertake the difficult task of laying down a schedule and classification of rates to be charged on railways instead of the present legal charges. They had done a great deal towards the completion of that work, and he hoped this next Session would see it completed. He believed the result would be a considerable reduction of the legal charges as compared with those that were now authorized by law. Then he passed an Act, at the strong request of the representatives of their sea-fishery interest, for the establishment of local sea-fishery committees on different parts of the coast of England. Then, besides the Directors' Liability Act, he also passed an Act providing that when companies were wound up by order of the Court the assets should be distributed much more rapidly than at present to those who were entitled to them ; and promoters and directors, and other officers, would be examined and thoroughly tested by a competent officer, and if they had been found guilty of misconduct or fraud they would be punished as they deserved. Finally, he had made an important amendment in a law of peculiar interest to working men—namely, the law relating to weights and measures. Formerly, inspectors of weights and measures only tested the weights ; in future they would test the weighing-machines as well as the weights, and he suspected a good many in that room could tell him that was a very important alteration indeed. (A voice : "Especially in coal.") Yes, especially in coal. That was a tolerably long statement of legislative changes. After speaking of the Load Line Act and the amendment of the bankruptcy law, he said he did not pretend that any of these were first-class measures, but none the less they were subjects of the greatest advantage and importance to the social welfare of the community, and as such he ventured to say that they were of infinitely more importance than not a few of those topics which were the occasion of the fiercest Parliamentary fight.'—*Times*, November 15.

Speaking at the Congress of Seamen in October, 1891, Mr. Plimsoll said : 'For my part, therefore, although I am a Radical, and although I recognise with gratitude all the good which the Liberal Party has done to the nation, I dread more than I can say any change in the position of political parties, as I feel sure that the fair hopes which we now indulge with reason on behalf of the seamen will have to be abandoned if we lose our present Government ; and I earnestly recommend seamen, therefore, and all other watering-men who care for sailors, sailors' wives, and sailors' children, to do their very best at the next General Election to keep the Conservatives in power.'

XI.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

THE Bill creating this new department was read a second time in the House of Commons on June 3, 1889. By it functions relating to agriculture and the farming interest generally, which had been performed by the branches and the staff of various public departments, were transferred to and consolidated in this one Board, which was to have at its head a new official, the President of the Board of Agriculture. The total additional expense of the new department in this year does not exceed £2,710, and Mr. Chaplin has been able fully to justify its constitution by the administrative work alone which it has been able to perform.

(1) In respect of pleuro-pneumonia: In 1889-90, the year before the Board came into existence, there were 499 outbreaks of pleuro-pneumonia in the country. In 1890-91, after the department had begun to deal with it, there were 295; and in the eight months since September, 1891, there have been only fifty outbreaks.

(2) In respect of foot-and-mouth disease: The last previous outbreak was in 1880, when it was calculated to have inflicted a loss of £3,000,000 on the agricultural community. Mr. Chaplin, in a speech at Donnington on the eleventh week of the present outbreak of the disease, compared the success which had attended the efforts of his department to stamp it out, as compared with the history of what had occurred in 1880. In the eleventh week after the discovery of the disease in 1880, the number of fresh outbreaks was 338; in this year, in the eleventh week, the number reported to the department was only five.

(3) In respect of hydrophobia: In the same speech Mr. Chaplin stated that in 1889 there were 312 cases of mad dogs in 61 counties; in 1891, after the muzzling order, 129 in 20 counties; in 1891, 79 in 17 counties; and in the present year there were 4 cases in January, 3 in February, and none in March.

Under this department an Intelligence Board has been established for the collection of statistics, and the diffusion of information and advice to agriculturists.

In legislation, it will be convenient here to refer to that which was passed affecting the agricultural interest, anterior to the erection of this department, and consequently under the charge of other Ministers, and to such legislation effected by private members. Thus it was Mr. Ritchie who carried the first Allotments Act of 1887 (50 and 51 Vict., c. 48). The operative parts of this act are: Section 2. Any six electors in either urban or rural districts may apply to the sanitary authority, and this authority 'shall by purchase or hire acquire any suitable land adequate to provide a sufficient number of allotments' (of any size not exceeding one acre) 'and shall let such allotments to persons belonging to the labouring population desiring to take the same.'

Section 3. 'Where the sanitary authority are unable to acquire suitable lands by hiring or purchase by agreement . . . the county authority may make a provisional order, authorizing . . . the purchase and taking of land compulsorily.' This order must be confirmed by the Local Government Board and by Parliament.

Section 7. 'The rents of the allotments shall be fixed at an amount not less than such as may reasonably be expected to ensure the sanitary authority from loss.'

Section 9. 'Any number not less than one-sixth of the electors in a rural district' may petition for the election of allotment managers. 'The sanitary authority shall order such election,' 'and all the Parliamentary electors shall be entitled to vote.'

Section 10. 'All expenses incurred by the sanitary authority under this Act shall be defrayed as part of the general expenses of this execution of the Public Health Act, 1875.'

Section 12. 'The county authority may authorize' the acquisition of pasture land in the same way as allotments, to be similarly applied for the benefit of the labouring population.

In 1890 the Act 53 and 54 Vict., c. 65, was passed, which extends the Act of 1887 by giving a right of appeal to the County Council where it is shown that the local sanitary authority are remiss, and by empowering the County Council to exercise all the powers of the local authority under the principal Act.

In 1887 Sir G. Birkbeck carried the Allotments Compensation Act (50 and 51 Vict., c. 26), which gives compensation to holders of cottage gardens and allotments for crops, trees and shrubs left in the ground at the end of their tenancies.

In 1888 the Government passed the Glebe Lands Act (51 and 52 Vict., c. 20), providing facilities for the acquisition by local authorities of Church lands, and their subsequent use as allotments.

In 1891 the Allotments Rating Act (54 and 55 Vict., c. 33) reduced the sanitary rates on allotments to the same rule as those on market-gardens.

It is satisfactory to know that, as a consequence of this legislation, and of the general desire of landowners to supply land for allotments, the number of allotments has been, and is, steadily increasing. The returns show that in 1873 there were 246,000; in 1886, 357,000; in 1891, 455,000 allotments. In their respective ways, the following Acts also are beneficial to the agricultural interest: the Margarine Act, 1887, which punishes the fraudulent sale as English butter of foreign substitutes for it. The Markets and Fairs Acts, 1887-91, which require the local authorities to provide means for weighing cattle. The Pleuro-Pneumonia Act, 1890, passed by Mr. Chaplin, which transfers the burden of compensation for slaughtered cattle from local rates to imperial funds.

The Small Holdings Bill of this year gives effect to the recommendations of the House of Commons' Select Committee on Small Holdings, which sat from 1888 to 1890. It empowers County Councils to borrow money from the Public Loans Commissioners at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the pro-

vision of small holdings, which are not to exceed fifty acres. They may not borrow to a larger extent than the sum whose interest will represent a rate of 1d. in the £. But that will enable a sum of £10,000,000 to be borrowed. The Bill further empowers County Councils to let lands, not exceeding fifteen acres in size, or of an annual value of not more than £15. The County Council may delegate the selling, letting, and management of small holdings to a committee of five members. Three of them are to be members of the Council, and two to be representatives of the immediate locality. It is obvious that, though admittedly an experimental recourse, and of limited application, it is of the highest import, and may have very far-reaching, social, and economical consequences.

XII.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

By no department has more remarkable work been accomplished in the six years than by this. It is admitted commonly that Mr. Mundella was a zealous administrator, and an enthusiast for education; but the progress made in every branch of national education during these years is indisputably greater than in the preceding six. A rough proof of this is given by the fact that £11,000,000 more has been spent on it during the last five years than in the corresponding period of Mr. Gladstone's last Government.

In 1889 the Technical Instruction Act was passed. It empowers County or Borough Councils to supply, or aid the supply of, technical instruction out of the local rate to an amount not exceeding 1d. in the £1. The local authority may appoint a committee consisting, either wholly or partly, of its members to carry out the details of the work. The managers of schools or institutions giving technical instruction in the district of a local authority may transfer their functions to the local authority. Then, in 1890, when the proposals of the Government in the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Bill for the extinction of licences were withdrawn,

the money which was to have been devoted to this object— £350,000 —was set free, and was added to the sum of £393,000 which, under the Bill, was to be handed over to the County Councils. Thus a sum of £740,376 was produced, which was appropriated to the County Councils with an expression of Parliamentary opinion that it should be used by them for technical instruction. A House of Lords return, No. 64, was presented to Parliament on May 2, 1892, which gives a most interesting and satisfactory account of the use to which the County Councils have put this grant. Its memorandum states as follows :

‘This return shows that the Councils of the one hundred and nine counties and county boroughs in England (excepting the county of Monmouth) have decided to apply their shares of the residue of the Customs and Excise duties in respect of the year ended March 31, 1891, in the following manner :

In 78 cases wholly to technical education (including science and art).

In 27 cases partly to those purposes.

In 4 cases wholly in aid of rates.

‘The Councils of the fifteen Welsh counties and county boroughs, and Monmouth, to which the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, 1889, applies, have decided to apply their shares of the duties in the following manner :

In 12 cases wholly to intermediate education, or intermediate and technical education combined.

In 1 case partly to intermediate and technical education.

In 1 case partly to intermediate education.

In 1 case partly to technical education.

‘The total amount paid to the Councils out of the residue of the duties in respect of the year amounted to £740,376 8s. 3d.

‘This sum has been applied as follows :

To technical education, including science and art and intermediate education	£	s.	d.
... ... 496,569 15 10			
In aid of rates 236,242 18 10			
Unappropriated 7,563 13 7			
	<hr/>		
		£740,376	8 3'

The Welsh Intermediate Education Act, which is here referred to, and which had been passed in 1889, was not originally a Government measure, but, practically, it was taken charge of by Sir W. Hart Dyke, and owed its passage to this Ministerial support and guidance. In the Report of

the Charity Commissioners for 1892, pp. 36-40, a most encouraging account is given of the zeal with which the Welsh people have availed themselves of the provisions of the Act of 1889, and of the funds which have come to them under the Act of 1890.

In 1889 £15,000 was granted to University Colleges in Great Britain.

In 1890 the New Code Act was passed; its purport is described in the leaflet issued by the National Union, which I now quote:

‘The keynote of the Code is freedom. To teachers, freedom from cast-iron rule and harassing restrictions; to children, freedom from cram and overpressure; to inspectors, freedom from barren routine duties and a long bondage to mechanical tests; to managers, freedom from anxiety as to their financial resources and liberty of choice in rendering the school course practical and useful. These great results were made possible by the Report of the Royal Commission, which was appointed by Lord Salisbury’s first Government in 1885, and it is to the Government of this day, and particularly to the courage and sagacity of the Conservative Ministers at the head of the Education Department, that the country is indebted for what was described by one Radical member of Parliament as a revolutionary change in our educational system, and by another as the largest measure of emancipation that had been passed in the interest of the people since the days of Mr. Forster.

‘The motive which underlies the whole scheme has been to treat those engaged in elementary education as intelligent beings, occupied in drawing out the capacities of the taught, and to afford the scholar the most complete moral and physical equipment for the battle of life that the necessarily short period of school age will permit; and in order to apply these principles to the fullest extent, the machinery has been so reorganized, and its various parts so informed with a new spirit, that for the first time since the bulk of the people have been brought under the influence of education, teachers and scholars are allowed the exercise of their best faculties, free from the cramping restraints of rigid and mechanical regulations.

‘In the first place the code secures the financial stability of schools by substituting

A LIBERAL FIXED GRANT

of 13s. 6d., which is on the present average more than three-fourths of the whole grant, for three distinct grants, of which only 4s. 6d. was fixed and the remainder variable, nearly one half the average grant being dependent on the actual passes

of individual children. By this arrangement it is calculated that 36 per cent. of the schools in the country (a still larger proportion in rural districts) will gain in sums rising to 5s. per head : this gain is unconditional the first year, and will be permanent to all schools that adapt themselves to the required conditions. A free gift is in fact offered to managers for the purpose of making their schools efficient, in striking contrast to the policy which has been followed for years, and still finds some advocates among Radical members of Parliament, of penalizing a school's weakness by taking away the means of improvement. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that this grant cannot be withdrawn unless the school is condemned as inefficient : it is further provided that no school shall be pronounced inefficient, and the grant withdrawn, until it has had a year's warning and a formal appeal to the judgment of a chief inspector against the second adverse verdict has been allowed.

“PAYMENT BY RESULTS” ABOLISHED.

Incidental to this change follows the disappearance of payment on the results of individual examination, with its effects of rigid classification and the treatment of child and teacher as money-making machines ; the merit grant also goes with its irritating and often unfair distinctions, and its tendency to set up fluctuating and capricious standards of excellence to the worry, and sometimes the prejudice, of really good teachers. The importance of the individual “pass” shrinks into insignificance compared with the progress of the scholars as a whole.

‘ABSOLUTE FREEDOM OF CLASSIFICATION.

‘The capacity of a child becomes the only test of classification, and in applying this test every disadvantage, under which child or school may have laboured, will be allowed due weight, and all risk will vanish of teachers being held responsible for such circumstances as irregularity of attendance and the gaps in school life caused by winter storms and epidemic sickness.

‘NEW AID TO VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS.

‘The effect of these general provisions upon all schools will be very great, but particularly upon that large class which are mainly under voluntary management, and often conducted with difficulty in rural districts and the poorer quarters of our great towns, and an incalculable impetus will thereby be given to educational efficiency in districts where for many causes it has hitherto languished ; but the Code, taking into consideration the relatively greater cost of schools in the midst of small populations and in sparsely peopled districts, likewise offers a special grant of £10 to which the 17s. 6d. limit does not apply (Code Act, 1890, sec. 2) to no less than 4,500 schools, which amounts

to an additional grant of 3s. 7d. a head in respect of those in average attendance at such schools.

‘Further, the difficulties teachers have to deal with in small schools are met by special courses in class subjects and needle-work, providing for a grouping of standards and a consequent saving of teaching power. In fact, it is estimated that of schools at present serving populations under five hundred, more than half will gain largely by the fixed grant being raised to 13s. 6d., and all may obtain the additional £10.

‘LIBERTY OF CHOICE IN CLASS SUBJECTS.

‘In dealing with the curriculum, the same free and enlightened spirit has been shown. A just reproach against former codes was the want of any allowance for different classes of schools, and the enforcement of similar courses of study on all. Freedom of classification, intelligently applied, will now go far to adjust the standard of attainment to the widely divergent circumstances of schools attended by children whose physical and mental condition are totally unlike, but the code in giving complete liberty of choice and treatment in class subjects takes note of other elements of difference, and suggests alternative courses adapted to the needs of particular districts. It thus lays down the great principle that education to be efficient should be practical, and directed, in the first instance, towards giving the scholar a good start in life.

‘INSTRUCTION IN PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

‘Under this head comes the encouragement of drawing, elementary science, and manual instruction, and of cookery and laundry-work for girls. Among the most important of the schemes of instruction in science is a course in agriculture, which, if intelligently followed and developed, will give scholars in the rural districts an intimate acquaintance, not only with the phenomena of nature, but also with the processes and appliances of that industry to which their lives will be devoted, and may be supplemented, where opportunity offers, by practical illustrations in the school-garden or allotment; schemes of instruction in the elements of mining and metallurgy may be substituted in the centres of the coal and iron industry, chemistry and mechanics will find a place in the manufacturing towns, and all these subjects will be introduced to the lower standards through the medium of object lessons, designed to awaken the powers of observation and train the mind in habits of reflection before any attempt is made to specialize the teaching of the science itself.

‘In order to promote teaching of this kind, the combination of several schools to provide central places of instruction, or the employment of peripatetic teachers is suggested, and by such means girls may leave school with all the domestic knowledge

required to make them useful at home, and eventually careful and thrifty housewives, and boys may in the agricultural districts acquire the tastes and inclinations of rural life, which they can afterwards turn to good purpose on the farm, the allotment, or the small holding, and in the towns those technical and commercial aptitudes which are necessary for the equipment of British commerce and industry in the struggle with foreign competition.

‘THE MORAL AND PHYSICAL ASPECTS

of education have also come in for their share of attention, as the Code emphasizes, by means of a special and graduated grant, the importance of conduct and moral training, as essential factors in the success and usefulness of a public elementary school, and lays down that the time devoted to instruction in physical exercises may be included in a school attendance. These will cover simple forms of bodily training, instruction in swimming where the use of baths can be obtained, and in other recreative pursuits, which are of the first importance to the health and industrial capacity of the people ; while in regard to swimming, opportunity is given for teaching a life-saving accomplishment of the highest value to our seafaring and riverside population.

‘THE QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS.

‘ Large reforms have also been introduced dealing with the composition and qualifications of the teaching profession. It has been made incumbent on managers, in some instances, to employ more teachers, and the Code takes effectual guarantees that they shall be more efficient in every grade. The pupil teacher system is reconstituted on a firmer basis, and one which will conduct into the organized ranks of the profession none but the flower of the apprentices. The conditions under which certificates have been hitherto granted are made much more stringent, and the entrance of untrained teachers into the profession will in the first year be checked by more than 1,200, a change which will go far to raise its status and efficiency ; while the establishment upon an experimental scale, which can easily be expanded, of a system of Day Training Colleges, in connection with the University Colleges in large towns and with the older Universities, will at once supply increased facilities for training, and bring the whole teaching profession into touch with wider standards of knowledge and a more liberal culture than has yet been generally associated with the possession of the Department’s certificate.

‘ NEW INSTRUCTIONS TO INSPECTORS.

‘ The position of the inspector is transformed from that of a mere examiner or assessor of the different factors, which went

to make up the monetary total of the grant, into one of advice and assistance to managers and teachers in the performance of an arduous and important public duty ; he will devote more time to visits without notice, and less to the mechanical drudgery in which he has been absorbed in the past. Additional facilities are given for the payment of the grant without examination in schools of well-tried excellence, or where circumstances might render the examination unfair to the deserts of a school, and the time thus set free will enable the inspector to restore to inspection its true place and value in a system of elementary education, and exercise an influence at once more wide and beneficial.

‘The standards of exemption have been left untouched, as it was felt that any disturbance of the conditions of juvenile labour at the present moment was liable to be misunderstood and to promote reaction, but by the variety and practical character imparted to the curriculum, and by the disappearance from school-life of all that was burdensome and mechanical, parents are encouraged to believe that the best interests of their children are served by keeping them at school. By a change permitting children who have passed Standard VII. to remain on the register until 14, teachers are relieved of the temptation to retard the progress of clever children ; and these, after passing Standard VII., can now devote themselves to special objects of practical utility.

‘But as many children cannot afford to remain in the day school till fourteen, the Code has sought to restore life and activity to our evening school system, by incorporating with it

CONTINUATION SCHOOLS

of a practical and attractive type, and by withdrawing the present irksome condition (Code Act, 1890, sec. 1) that all evening scholars must necessarily be examined in the standard subjects. By these expedients it is hoped that the enormous annual waste involved to the country and to the scholars in the loss of what they have learnt in the day school will be checked during the gap that separates their passing the standard of exemption and obtaining fixed occupation, and that by a course of instruction at once practical and recreative an enormous improvement in the moral and social condition of the people will be brought about.’

Free Education.

In 1891 the Free Education Act was passed. ‘It had’ (and I quote again from a leaflet issued by the National Union), ‘the *immediate effect* of extinguishing school-fees from September 1, 1891, in more than two-thirds of the schools of

the country, and of largely reducing them in a great proportion of the remainder ; and the Education Department will compensate managers out of Imperial revenues by a fee-grant of 10s. a year per head in average attendance.

‘ This result is brought about by the provision that in any school receiving the grant, where the fees have hitherto not exceeded the amount of such grant, no fees shall henceforth be charged ; and in other cases fees must be reduced in the aggregate by the amount of the grant.

‘ The acceptance of the fee-grant is *optional*, and its refusal from the date at which the Act comes into operation does not bar school-managers from accepting it later, but their choice must in all cases obviously be determined by the circumstances of the district, because the Act empowers the Education Department, after a year’s grace, to see that free school-accommodation is provided for all children between three and fifteen, for whom such accommodation is desired, so that wherever a school is the only one in a district it is almost certain to become free by the direct operation of the Act.

‘ A parent, however, will only be able to claim as a right gratuitous education for his child at a school where the accommodation has been declared free ; he may join with others in representing to the Education Department that there is an insufficiency of free places for their children in the school district in which they reside, but the Act gives him no power to claim a free place for his child in any particular school which still retains the right to charge fees.

‘ As schools with an income from fees of less than 10s. per head are almost exclusively those in rural villages and the poorer quarters of large towns, the genuine poor will gain the principal and most immediate relief from the burden of school fees, and what they will perhaps esteem more highly, complete exemption from the humiliating expedient of applying to school boards and boards of guardians respectively for the remission or for the payment of such fees.

‘ The reduction of fees in other schools will afford relief to many who, though willing and anxious to pay a small fee, have found the amount hitherto charged a heavy addition to their weekly expenses, while in some cases the direct operation of the Act may be assisted by the admission of a certain proportion of free scholars, the fees still chargeable being raised from the remainder.

‘ In schools where the income from fees and the sale of books is less than 10s. per head, managers are required to make the provision of school-requisites a first charge upon the additional grant, so that parents will be relieved of this item of cost as well, but the rest of the surplus may be devoted to relieving

the burden which weighs upon voluntary subscribers in many places, or, in the case of districts under school-boards, to the remission of rates, subject, of course, to the obligation to spend what is necessary in order to place a school and maintain it in a state of efficiency. Direct relief will also be afforded to the ratepayers, in respect of the sum of £60,000, paid annually by the guardians of the poor as school-fees on behalf of non-pauper children.

'As, moreover, the whole fee grant will in all cases be included in the income from other sources, as an equivalent to which the ordinary Parliamentary grant is paid, the 17s. 6d. limit (against which so much may be urged when its effect is still further to reduce the income of schools whose financial resources are already straitened by low fees), will be automatically raised in every school where the fee-income has not hitherto reached 10s. per head, and the schools serving the poorest populations will thus derive the greatest pecuniary benefit from the change. Managers are also expressly permitted to pay any surplus arising out of the fee-grant into a common fund for distribution to other schools.

'Where the fee-grant per head is less than the income hitherto received from fees, the managers are entitled to raise the balance by distributing the fees retained on any system they please ; and the Act contains provisions enabling the Education Department to sanction the imposition of increased fees in certain schools of a group, and authorizing managers so to associate themselves that the surplus income on the accounts of one or more schools may be devoted to the purposes of any other members of the group ; which arrangement, while preserving schools of different grades, will make it easier to supply without friction the necessary amount of free school accommodation in any district, and render the new system capable of simple adjustment to the circumstances of different localities.

'The liberty of religious teaching and the independence of voluntary management have been stoutly maintained by the Government against the attacks of the Radicals, who sought to deny the benefits of the Act to any school in which distinctive religious teaching was given, and to introduce local control into the managing bodies of voluntary schools, as a step towards the establishment of universal school boards and a high education rate.

'The Opposition also attempted without success to remove the presumption of suitability, which has hitherto attached to every public elementary school, so as to make it possible for a small minority of malcontents in every rural village to impose for political reasons a second school upon the locality, on the pretext that a Church of England school, even with the protec-

tion of the conscience clause, was unsuitable for the children of Nonconformists.

‘To sum up, the Act affords the largest measure of relief from that particular form of taxation which, under the name of school fees, is directly connected with compulsory education, and includes in that relief all persons who desire to avail themselves of it. The whole community undertakes a charge of £2,000,000, which has hitherto fallen mainly on the working-classes and small shopkeepers, and this is effected not by any violent disruption of the existing system, or with any neglect of the interests that have grown up in the fifty years during which the State has interfered with the education of the people, but by an almost automatic process, gently, gradually, and with due regard not only to the feelings, but even the prejudices, of the population.

‘It has been recognised that the voluntary system is dear to the English people, in both its religious and economical aspects ; and one of the principal effects of the Act will be so to supplement the resources of voluntary schools in the rural districts, that the establishment of school boards, with what has proved a most costly and inefficient machinery in small parishes, will be definitely arrested in most parts of the country.

‘By the emphasis which the Act lays upon grouping, managers in districts where there are many voluntary schools will be encouraged to combine their resources for mutual organization and defence. Subscriptions will be stimulated, and the substitution of a fixed and certain source of revenue, paid quarterly out of the public treasury, in lieu of precarious and fluctuating sums collected in driblets, often with great trouble and worry, will go far to strengthen the financial status of all classes of voluntary schools ; while the fresh legislative sanction which has been given to their independent and religious character will tend to confirm them in public estimation, and fortify their position against the attacks of the secularist, and the more insidious hostility which conceals itself under the specious guise of “unsectarian” opinion.’

In connection with the Free Education Act, it may be noted that the Education Department took advantage of the abolition of fees to issue a circular inculcating the advantages of thrift. This is now printed as an appendix to the Code, and has led in a large number of instances to the establishment of school savings-banks, in which the money hitherto paid in fees has been deposited for the future benefit of the children. There are no returns of the actual amount thus deposited ; but the latest returns from the Post Office

Savings Banks show that the sum of £71,000,000 is now deposited with them, which is the largest amount yet reached.

In 1892 an Evening School Code has been laid before Parliament. It abolishes the last vestige of payment on the result of individual examination, and completes a system of continuation schools by substituting for the standards in use in the day-schools courses of study extending over seven years. A new schedule of subjects, specially designed for evening schools, has been drawn up, with particular reference to the industrial and commercial aspects of education. The following figures are interesting. During the five years of Mr. Mundella's administration, the number of night-scholars examined fell from 38,493 in 1880, to 24,233 in 1885; during the five years of Sir W. Dyke's administration, the number in average attendance has risen from 26,089 in 1886, to 51,974 in 1891; and there is reason to believe that the figures for last winter will show a further large increase.

For public education in England and Wales there has this year been voted £5,946,213.

XIII.

SCOTLAND (THE SCOTCH OFFICE).

SCOTLAND has with England and Wales shared in the general advantages that have followed on the foreign and financial policy of the Government, and on its administrative work. It has shared also the benefit of such general measures of legislation as the Mines Regulation Act and the last Factory Act. But, in addition, Scotland has received from the Imperial Parliament in the last six years much special legislation of considerable importance. The Session of 1889 was devoted mainly to Scotch business, and in it were passed the Scotch Local Government Act, which gave to the Scotch counties, on analogous lines, the popular and representative local government which the English Act had given to the English counties; and the Universities Act, which still further popularized the Scotch Universities.

In 1887 were passed the Criminal Procedure (Scotland)

Act and the Crofters Act. In 1889 the Herring Fishery Act and the Municipal Electors Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act were passed. Free Education was given to Scotland as a complement of the provisions of its Local Government Act. Under the Customs and Excise Grant of 1890, and the Equivalent Grant of 1891, large sums have been allocated to Scotch purposes, partly in relief of rates, and partly for the furtherance of technical and secondary education. As the result of a commission of inquiry into the condition of the West Highlands and Islands, emigration has been assisted from the distressed districts, and grants made for the development of their resources and industries.

XIV.

POST OFFICE.

CHANGES and reforms have been constantly introduced during the six years. An express delivery for letters and parcels has been started. Letter cards have been introduced; the inland sample post has been re-established. The experiment of telegraphic money-orders has been made. As regards foreign and colonial mails, new contracts, giving greater speed, have been made for the carriage of the mails to India, China, and the West Indies. One postal rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. for the colonies as a whole has been established. As regards the great army of Post Office employés, this letter from Mr. Raikes' secretary showed the anxiety of the department to meet their legitimate wishes :

‘ 16th February, 1891.

‘ DEAR SIR,

‘ I am desired by Mr. Raikes to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, in which you call his attention to certain statements which have been made to the effect that he is reducing the wages and salaries of Post Office servants. The following facts will, Mr. Raikes thinks, enable you to judge how far such a statement is correct :

‘ Last year the scale of wages of the London sorters was increased by as much as six shillings a week, many new first-class sorterships were created, giving promotion to deserving

sorters of the second class, and at the same time the whole class of junior sorters was admitted to the second class. Corresponding improvements in the scale of pay were effected in Edinburgh and Dublin, and altogether about 4,000 men have benefited by these changes. It is not, however, in the Metropolitan offices alone that the position of Post Office employés has been improved. In March last Mr. Raikes appointed a committee to consider the pay and position of provincial sorting-clerks and telegraphists, and, as a result of the recommendations of this committee, no less than 10,000 provincial officers, both men and women, were given better pay, and many other advantages, such as extra pay for work done on Sundays and Bank Holidays, increased pay for overtime work, and pay during absence from sickness. These benefits have also been extended to the telegraph staff at the Metropolitan offices, numbering over 3,000 persons. The cost of these concessions has already amounted to £200,000 a year. A revision was at the same time set on foot, and is now in progress, of the upper appointments in the postal and telegraphic staff at all the chief provincial offices. This revision will not only improve the position of the superintending officers themselves, but will greatly improve the prospects of the juniors.

‘Other minor improvements have been made, and it may safely be asserted that at no period in the history of the Post Office have such widespread benefits been conferred on the junior classes of its servants.

‘Yours very faithfully,
‘R. A. EGERTON.’

SUPPLEMENT.

To the great volume of legislative and administrative work which may be specifically attributed to particular Government departments, and which has been set out in bare outline in the previous pages, it is right to add one or two other deeds which were not in the same way the outcome of special offices :

The revision of the Procedure Rules of the House of Commons in 1887 and 1888.

The satisfactory settlement of the thorny question of Royal Grants in 1889.

The Tithes Act of 1891, which it may be hoped will enable the Welsh clergy to obtain, without lawless friction, the payment of their tithes.

The Clergy Discipline Act of 1892, which was obstructed with such Boëotian bigotry by a knot of young Welsh Radicals.

The Savings Banks Act of 1891, which imposes strict conditions of audit, etc., to preclude fraud or careless management.

In general administration it is interesting to note to what an extent our Government contracts with foreigners have diminished since 1886. The first Parliamentary return on this subject was made on June 26, 1886, in pursuance of an order, moved for by Mr. Peter McDonald, for a return 'of all contracts for articles of home manufacture made in the United Kingdom by the several Government departments during the past seven years with contractors outside the kingdom.' The return showed that in that period contracts amounting to £886,566 had been made with foreign contractors, giving an annual average of about £126,000 spent in this way outside the United Kingdom. Mr. Gladstone had been in office for six of these seven years. Since 1886 Colonel Howard Vincent has moved each year for a similar return, and, as a consequence of the public attention thus excited, and of the increased care of the departments, the last return, dated July 3, 1891, shows that for the year between April 1, 1890, and March 31, 1891, the former annual total of money expended in such contracts has been reduced by £89,000, and now stands at £37,000, and that of that sum £34,542 was expended on Italian woods of the special hardness required for butts and fore-ends of rifles. The return for 1891-92 showed that £39,143 had been spent on foreign contracts.

CONCLUSION.

THE National Liberal Federation in its manifesto of August, 1886, with a ludicrous ignorance of the moving forces in contemporary politics, wrote of the 'congenial inactivity of the Conservatives.' The history of the work done by this Government makes it impossible for the wildest wire-puller of the Radicals to impute to it, or to its followers, 'inactivity.' In six years that Government has given a prosperous and



progressive period to British history. It found Ireland dis-orderly and lawless. It left her tranquil and law-abiding. It found us on uneasy terms with European Powers, holding a distressed Egypt on a precarious tenure. It has left us on friendly terms with every foreign Power, with Egypt growing year by year in prosperity owing to British administration. India has been protected. Possible difficulties with foreign countries in every quarter of the world have been removed. Our Empire has been extended without bloodshed, and with the approval of our neighbouring colonists. At last our Navy has been put in a state of adequate efficiency. At last some security has been given for our food-conveying fleets across the oceans, in the event of war, by some fortification of our coaling-stations and mercantile ports. In finance there has been a reduction of the taxation which may be felt by the poor, with a concurrent increase of expenditure, which bestows unequivocal benefits on the nation at large. In legislation ; by the extension of popular local government ; by aids to an increase of allotments and small holdings ; by encouragement of education, and the promotion of the various forms of legislation which were intended to improve the public health and increase the comfort of the poor, the several heads of Government departments for the last six years have worked with admirable zeal and success. There is no administrative blunder to be recollected with regret. There is no gross jobbery to be remembered with shame. The Government, since the retirement of Lord Randolph Churchill, has shed no living member. We, who have been glad to support Unionist principles through six years of unscrupulous opposition and incessant depreciation, ought to take every opportunity at the conclusion of this Parliament to record our sense of the good practical work which has been done in every quarter of the Empire, and in every department of affairs, by the Government of Lord Salisbury.

THE END.





